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ABSOLUTE UNDERGROUND

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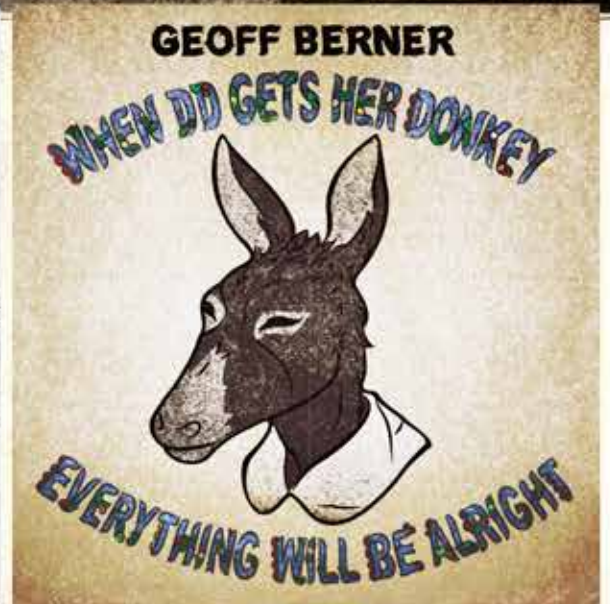
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VICTORIAS' LOCALS ONLY

as much as possible. We wrote the record in 7 months, and recorded it in Los Angeles with our producer Daniel Braunstein at DB Music Studios. The lyrics for the record were written by Dave and myself as well; the album's theme is based off of different coloured auras, and the meaning behind them.

AU: How would you describe your sound?

MS: Our sound is kinda hard to pinpoint. But I feel like that's the way it should be. Whenever we go to write a song, there's never a set thing we have in mind. It's always just what suits the song. To sum up what we sound like, it's mostly just a bunch of heavy stuff mixed with a bunch of pretty stuff with a guy yelling.

AU: Craziest show you've ever played?

MS: The craziest show FIA has ever played was most likely the Annex Wreckroom in Toronto, while we were on tour with Structures and

Volumes, that was wild. There were a lot of memorable ones on that tour.

AU: Any up and coming shows for us to look forward to?

MS: As of right now, we don't have anything booked. We've been promoting our record online a ton since its release a few weeks ago. I'm currently on tour, playing with iwrestledabearonce and won't be back for a little while, but we definitely have plans to tour this year for the record. Just gotta wait for the right time!

AU: Last words?

MS: Betchya I can throw a football over them mountains.

<https://www.facebook.com/fallinarchaea>

<http://fallinarchaea.bandcamp.com/>



Fall In Archaea

Interview by Alex Snow

Absolute Underground: Are you all native to Victoria?

Mike Stringer: Yes I am! Lived here all my life, and wouldn't ever want to move.

AU: Who's in the band?

MS: Our current line-up consists of myself on guitar, Dave Goertzen on vocals, Josh Richardson on bass, and Brent Rodgers on drums.

AU: How long has the band been together... didn't you just replace the singer?

MS: Fall In Archaea formed in 2008. We recently

did part ways with our old vocalist, Alex. It happened right in the middle of recording this new record. I had always looked up to Dave as a vocalist, and knew his voice on this new material could be very unique, and different. We ended up clicking, and we couldn't be happier with how it turned out.

AU: What's the story behind the newest album, Aura Magenta?

MS: *Aura Magenta* turned out to take the longest amount of time we had ever spent on a record. Brent and myself wrote the record instrumentally, and it was definitely a new experience. We spent a lot of time making sure the songs were 100% how we wanted, and tried to push ourselves musically





BRASS

Interview by Willow Gamberg

Absolute Underground: Who are you and what are you most famous for?

BRASS: WE ARE BRASS. We are most famous for sweating, bleeding, and entertaining you.

AU: How would you describe your musical style? Any particular musical inspirations or themes?

BRASS: We are the future of music. We're inspired by things that make us move, smile or think. And a lack of sobriety.

AU: How long have you been a band, and how has the group developed over time?

BRASS: We started playing as a group in January of 2013.

Before that, we were friends, some of us roommates, and lovers. We've developed a stronger 'bond' since then.

AU: You're releasing an EP this January... What can you tell us about it? Is it your first release?

BRASS: It is our first release, that's true, kid. We wanted a snapshot of the band

in its infancy, so we went in and recorded four songs in a night. We were more concerned with the quality of the songs than the quality of the recording, but we're proud of how it sounds.

AU: What's the craziest thing that's happened at a show you've played?

BRASS: No idea. BRASS shows are known for ridiculousness, but that's entirely the crowd. On our behalf, we've had members electrocuted, punched in the face, drum kits have exploded, diapers, beer showers, sauna burns, nudity, blood, sweat. You know, the stuff that makes a good show.

AU: Devon, you are known in certain circles as "that super-wasted bartender"... What's your booze of choice these days? It can't still be tequila... how about the rest of you guys?

Devon: You can choose?



VANCOUVER VENGEANCE

Rory: Right now, it's the bottle of bourbon I'm holding. Elijah Craig.

Tristan: I'm drinking a beer.

Zak: Irish whiskey. (Editor's note: Zak's been booze-free for 30 days, so he's fiendin'. Like, he's been having dreams about drinking.)

AU: What do you think of the Vancouver Music scene at the moment? Any hopes for the future?

BRASS: Vancouver has so much to offer, it's stupid. There's so much talent here, but finding places to play is a little harder. People complain about the division in our scene, but it's entirely attributed to the fact that there are no venues that expose people to new, exciting things. People go to one venue for metal shows, one venue for hip-hop, one venue for surf-reverb indie jangle-rock or house shows for punk. We hope things get more inclusive.

AU: How about future hopes for the band? Any full records or tours in the works?

BRASS: We hope to one day have a cereal, 'cause BRASS is a great way to start your day. Other than that, we've been writing a full-length, which should be out for the summer. We'll be playing less shows to focus on the record.

AU: Final words of wisdom for the nice readers?

BRASS: Try and be nice to people, avoid eating fat, read a good book every now and then, get some walking in, and try and live together in peace and harmony with people of all creeds and nations.

More information at:

<https://www.facebook.com/brassvancouver>

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Culted

Interview by Charley Justice

Embrace it or loathe it, technology has made the globe much smaller, and the world of music is no exception. Collaboration fears no distance, and it is even more brazen in the grim and morbid regions of black metal, where a purely studio entity is a thoroughly acceptable format, maybe even additionally credible. Converging from the barren waste of central Canada and the frozen haven of Scandinavia emerges Culted, an as-of-yet purely studio black / doom project, staffed by veritable veterans who proved at the gates with 2009's *Below the Thunders of the Upper Deep* that they were deserving of your undivided attention. A little label named Relapse thought so as well, and was behind this appropriately-titled, semi-enigmatic musical

morgoth from its inception. A cold start to 2014 sees Culted taking their next step with the release of their sopohomore full-length, *Oblique to All Paths*, an album layered in mire and shrouded in mystery. A quick discourse with guitarist / conceptualist Michael Klassen was necessary to clear the smoke...

Absolute Underground: Self-identified genre description... go:

Michael Klassen: Chaos of the normal.

AU: You're well aware that doom metal is massively trendy right now. Way to be ahead of the curve...

MK: Well, we sure didn't think we were ahead of any curve

regarding trends when we began. Culted's sound is harvested from those that came before us; we are humbly on the shoulders of giants like Black Sabbath, Khanate, Winter, Electric Wizard, Sunn O))), Yob, Disembowelment, Uneathly Trance, etc.

AU: Any story or hidden depth to the name? Or is it just an aesthetically appropriate, yet unused word?

MK: Nothing hidden. If you define cult as a group or organization, religious or otherwise, with an agenda to coerce individuals into like-minded groups that can then be subjugated within a specific belief system and world-view, then it follows that most of society is culted to some degree, whether consciously or not. Culted acknowledges that reality, and attempts to explore those themes with sound. Daniel [Jansson] came across the word in an article he was reading around the time we were

brainstorming names and it stuck.

AU: Relapse eh? A pretty sweet gig from an outside perspective. Good experiences with them?

MK: Absolutely, I have nothing but great things to say about them.

AU: How'd you find Jansson? Or did he find you?

MK: I sought him out on Myspace after hearing his industrial/noise project Deadwood, specifically his 8 19 album. I asked him to contribute some additional sounds for an intro that Matt and I were working on for Of Human Bondage's third album. We kept in touch, talking music, philosophy etc... a while later, he asked if we'd be up for putting some doom sounds together and we agreed.

AU: Does Culted ever rehearse (sans vocals, obviously)? Or purely studio?

MK: Not really, although at least one of the longer pieces, which will most likely appear on the next album, has been thoroughly rehearsed.

AU: Collaboration-wise, does Daniel's creative presence bleed into the instrumentation, and the MB crew's influence into the lyrics and phrasing? Or is it a thoroughly specialized division of labour?

MK: We send Daniel the basic structure of the songs with guitar, bass and drums, and he'll add his vocals, and random sounds and noise throughout them. We play no part in his vocal delivery or phrasing other than an edit here or there.

WRETCHED WINNIPEG



AU: How's being in a long distance relationship? Probably good for the internal dynamic!

MK: You're right, no bickering, just art, the way it should be.

AU: Oblique: I love the production, and I didn't do my research. Self-produced?

MK: It is. We recorded the guitars in my good friend and Culted collaborator Erik Larsen's basement, who is one half of the modular synth duo Solar Coffin. The drums were recorded in a close family member's basement and the rest we recorded and mixed in Matt's. Daniel locked

himself away in an isolated family friend's house for five days to complete the vocals; additional sounds were done from his home.

AU: Non-sarcastic question: does cold actually help you write better black metal? Or is it just a convenient retroactive excuse?

MK: Possibly, we may very well be a product of our environment, but it's not something I'm conscious of. I don't write riffs while contemplating the cold of winter or anything.

<https://www.facebook.com/Culted>

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THUR.6 KICKED IN THE TEETH

FRI.7 OH SHIT | ELECTRIC REVIVAL

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SAT.8 GHAR GHAR'S | OH SHIT | PAINT THE DAMAGE

SUN.9 BEER, BACON & BOOBS

A BURLESQUE BRUNCH 1PM

SUN.9 LIE AMUNG US | OUR LAST CRUSADE

COMMENCING HUMAN | DESPREATION | DEXTRESS

MON.10 OPEN COMMUNITY JAM

TUES.11 ALTER EGO'S COMEDY NIGHT

THE DISTILLERY 7TH BDAY BASH

WED.12 GAMES NIGHT & DJ TREX

THUR.13 JORDAN POTEKAL | SCARLETT

FROM BIRCH TO YEW | JOEL COSSETTE

FRI.13 ANTI VALENTINE SHOW

SUN.16 OPEN SAILS | LET DOWN EASY

HALFWAY TO HOLLYWOOD | WHAT HAPPENING

WED.19 NOW OR NEVER | PETER & THE WOLVES

SON OF A PITCH | WHITE CHOCOLATE THUNDER

THUR.20 KICKED IN THE TEETH

FRI.21 THE BUFFET | BLADES OF STEEL | BURNING DAISY

SAT.22 FRANKY VALLEY | KEITH MORRISON BAND

SUN.23 COMMENTS & CONCERN | SEALEGS

MON.24 OPEN COMMUNITY JAM

TUES.25 ALTER EGO'S COMEDY NIGHT

WED.26 GAMES NIGHT & DJ TREX

THUR.27 ZIPGUN WISDOM | BLACKEST SIN

FRI.28 FIGHT TO SWILL WITH GUESTS

MARCH

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SUN.2 CALGARY PUNK SHOWS PRESENTS ALL AGES

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WED.5 CHRIS NAISH | PETER & THE WOLVES

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THUR.6 KICKED IN THE TEETH

FRI.7 THE ROAST OF BDFM

SAT.8 CAUGHT OFF GUARD CD RELEASE

SUN.9 BEER, BACON & BOOBS

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MON.10 OPEN COMMUNITY JAM

TUES.11 ALTER EGO'S COMEDY NIGHT

WED.12 GAMES NIGHT & DJ TREX

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SUN.16 REBIRTH EVENTS PRESENTS

WED.19 GAMES NIGHT & DJ TREX

THUR.20 KICKED IN THE TEETH

FRI. 21 BARELY ZEBRA W/ GUESTS

SAT.22 WACKEN METAL BATTLE - ROUND 3

SUN.23 REBIRTH EVENTS PRESENTS

MON.24 OPEN COMMUNITY JAM

TUES.25 ALTER EGO'S COMEDY NIGHT

WED.26 GAMES NIGHT & DJ TREX

FRI.28 REBIRTH EVENTS PRESENTS

SAT.29 THRONE OF VENGEANCE W/ GUESTS

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The Weir

Interview by Allison Drinnan

Living in Calgary, it is only natural to take advantage of the Bow River. Floating down the Bow on a hot summer day is a civic right of passage – as Calgarian as the Stampede.

Just as well-known in this city is to be wary of the weir, also identified locally as the “drowning machine” of the Bow River. Now though, when you hear people talking about The Weir, it isn't in reference to the danger in the Bow, but to one of the heaviest, sludgiest bands in town.

The Weir – composed of guitarist/vocalist Sergey Jmourovski, guitarist/vocalist Jim Hudson, bassist/vocalist Alex Kurth and drummer Mark Schmidt – released their debut, *Yesterday's Graves*, in May 2013 and have recently pressed the album on vinyl for your listening pleasure.

Absolute Underground: How did The Weir form?

Sergey Jmourovski: We were friends before even starting this band, through playing in other bands or playing shows together, going for bike rides and drinking beers by the river. So when the idea came up to start a loud, slow, heavy band, it all came together very naturally and very quickly. We

began jamming in the late fall of 2011 and were playing shows by the following spring.

AU: Tell me a little bit about the name choice... How did you come up with that?

SJ: The name was one of the ones that we threw in a hat and nobody hated. There is no deep concept behind it, but we do like how it relates to our hometown (where three out of four of us aren't even from)... probably has to do with aforementioned beers by the river.

AU: How would you describe the type of music The Weir makes, and how it might differ from other projects the members have been involved with? Why play this style of music?

SJ: I'd say we play a mix of sludgy hardcore and doom/post-metal. It's not really anything new, as Jim and I used to play in a sludge-ish band called Baikal a while back, and I was in a spacey metal band called Snake Mountain forever ago, so this seemed like a logical progression for both of us. Alex and Mark were excited to do something different from their previous endeavors and brought a whole shwack of style and flavour with them; we think it all worked out quite well. All of us really enjoy listening to and playing this type of music, so why not go with it? It's fun to slow things down and really open it all up.

AU: How did the writing process go for *Yesterday's Graves*?

SJ: The writing process for *Yesterday's Graves* was a usual exchange of ideas. Some songs were written separately, some made up on the spot, but every song was put together with all of us in the same room, and with everyone's ideas in consideration. It took us just under a year to finish all the writing and get down to recording. Would've taken less but we were all also involved in other bands' touring and recording (Wake, Breathe Knives, La Luna and On Lock).

AU: I LOVE the album artwork! Who came up with it and how did they come up with that

concept?

SJ: Scott Shellhammer is the man responsible for the art. I became a fan of his through his work with another local (now Chicago-based) band, Mares of Thrace. We sent the music over and gave him free rein over the concept, and we think it was for the best. It's a really abstract piece, so it's been a lot of fun hearing the different interpretations of what it depicts. I've heard it described as a black hole, or a pool of blood spreading under ice, which I like a lot.

AU: Why choose to make a physical copy of the album? Why vinyl? Will it be available in compact disc form as well?

SJ: All of us are record junkies so it was a no-brainer on the format of the release. To us (and many others), there is something very special about holding and listening to an LP, compared say to a CD or a tape. It's way more expensive to make, but so worth it. Plus it makes a dope frisbee. There are no plans to make a CD or a tape version of this record, but you can get the mp3s for free from theweir.bandcamp.com

AU: What was it like playing Sled Island this year with the flood issues? I wasn't in town for it, but from what I have heard it sounds like it was a really unique experience.

SJ: Sled Island was quite an intense experience. Playing with Torche was a ton of fun, even after witnessing the supreme greatness of SWANS the night before. But as the flood took over on Friday and the festival shut down, lots of us found

CALGARY CARNAGE



ourselves homeless and in the mood to fucking party! Tons of friends lent their homes to host a slew of amazing shows that weekend, it was really special. We got to play at Bad Manors with our friends in Trigger Effect (RIP Nick Babeu), and that feeling of support and camaraderie was something we'll never forget.

AU: Are you planning to tour anytime soon?

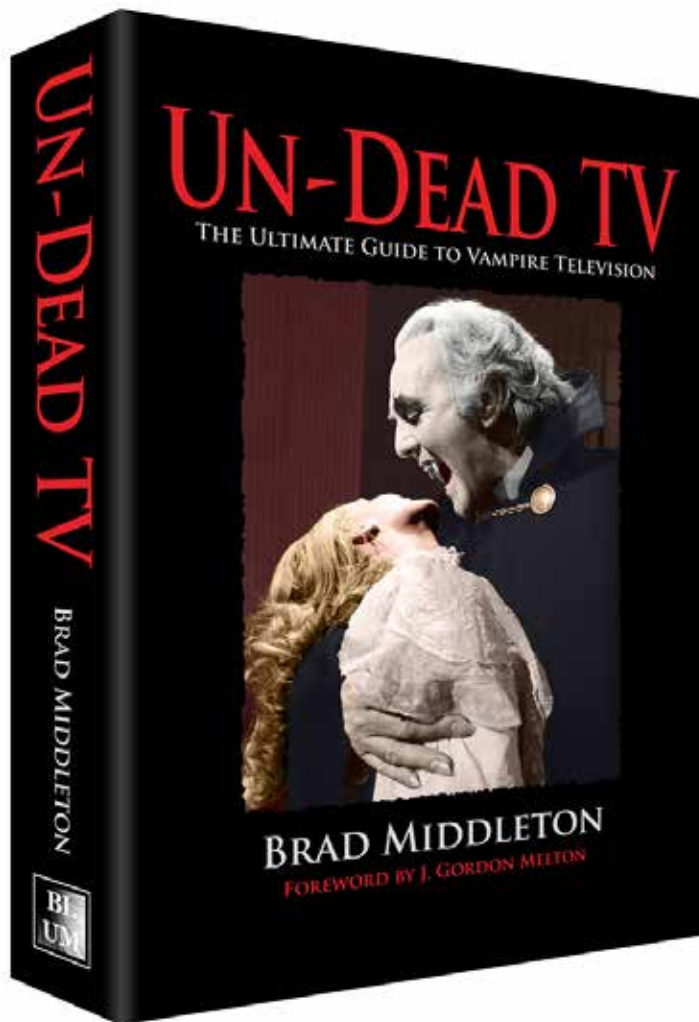
SJ: We're going to do some shows around Western and Central Canada (Vancouver-Winnipeg area) but won't be going out for much longer than that this summer. There are other plans but they're top secret for now!

Catch The Weir live at their LP release, March 6th at Broken City with Bison and Temple.

More information at:

<http://theweir.bandcamp.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Weir/163321613777117>



Brad Middleton and Un-Dead TV

Interview by Ira Hunter



Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most infamous for?

Brad Middleton: I'm Brad Middleton, and I guess you could say I'm famous for creating the first vampire pop culture website on the Internet: "Vampyres Only." It began as a collection of pictures and text about vampires, primarily from film, but soon became a gathering place for

role-players and real sanguinists—and our common ground was a love for vampires. I started the site in 1994, and it's still going to this day.

AU: What made you decide to become a writer?

BM: My first foray into writing was posting book and film reviews on my website. I've been writing fiction here and there for years (primarily unfinished screenplays), but up until a few years ago, it was really just a hobby. In 2009, I was introduced to J. Gordon Melton, a friend of friend, and he asked me to re-write the television section for the third edition of his mighty tome, *The Vampire Book: The Encyclopedia of the Undead*. At that time, my idea of television vampires was pretty much limited to *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Angel*, *Forever Knight*, and *Dark Shadows*. While

researching, I discovered that TV vampire stories go back decades, to the pioneering days of television itself—yet there had never been a single book dedicated to the subject. Any mention of television vampires was always buried somewhere within film books. I soon realized that the constraints of an encyclopedia would never allow for me to include as much about the history of television vampires as I felt the subject demanded—so I decided to write my own book! After contributing to Melton's work, I continued researching and writing for an additional three years.

AU: Tell us about the book you wrote called *Un-Dead TV*?

BM: *Un-Dead TV* is the ultimate guide to vampire television, the most thorough book available about the subject. At over 1000 listings, covering 63 years, *Un-Dead TV* catalogues everything about vampires on the small screen, from documentaries and cartoons to TV series and TV movies, and everything in between. All in, my research took about three years. The furthest

back I could trace the vampire was to 1949, when Bela Lugosi dressed as Dracula in a comedy skit on "The Texaco Star Theater." Vampires have become ubiquitous in our popular culture, and I believe this can be attributed to television—these creatures would never be as prevalent today were it not for this medium.

AU: What are some vampyric gems people may have missed?

BM: Here are a few: "Spatula, Prince of Dorkness" (1990) is a bizarre, funny, self-aware episode from the cartoon *Attack of the Killer Tomatoes*, and stars Dracula. Then there's *The Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew Meet Dracula* (1977)—a smorgasbord of 70s pop culture, fashion, music, and, of course, Dracula! The UK series *Ultraviolet* (1998) and *Young Dracula* (2006) are two very different productions with an interesting, modern spin on vampires. Finally, *The Halloween That Almost Wasn't* (1979) and *The Midnight Hour* (1985) are two great old TV movies that still hold up to this day.

AU: How about the other book you are writing called *The Great Fright North*?

BM: *The Great Fright North* is a survey of Canadian horror entertainment in film, television, theatre, comics and radio. Researching this one has been a daunting task thus far, because there's been very little attention given to our home-grown horror over the years. But that's also what makes this book so vital, in my opinion, and also so interesting to research.

AU: What is it about Canadian horror that drew you to this idea?

BM: Canadians are inundated with entertainment from south of the border, so much so that most of our own productions get lost in the shuffle. But we have such a fascinating horror history,

ABSOLUTE HORROR

especially with film. For example, thanks to tax shelter schemes in the 1970s, many B-grade horror films were made, often for the wrong reasons—but this period also produced two big names: Ivan Reitman (*Cannibal Girls*) and David

Cronenberg (*Shivers*, *Rabid*, and many more). Part of the reason why I'm writing this book is to draw attention to some popular horror films that many of us don't even realize are Canadian: *Black Christmas*, *My Bloody Valentine*, *The Changeling*, and *Prom Night*, just to name a few. We've also produced a number of great horror television series, often featuring vampires. The genre has also been alive and well in our theatre scene, going as far back as 1929 when the stage production of "Dracula" ran at the Princess Theatre in Toronto. And the iconic Canadian actor Lorne Greene

also starred as Dracula in a radio production on the CBC, back in 1949. What I'm finding the most difficult, however, is tracking down Canadian horror comics. There's not a lot of representation here, but I've managed to uncover a hint of it so far.

AU: What other projects do you have planned?

BM: Researching and writing *The Great Fright North* will take me well into 2014. But during my downtime I'm also plugging away at writing fiction, with a couple of short stories on the go, as well as a feature film script.

For more information, visit:

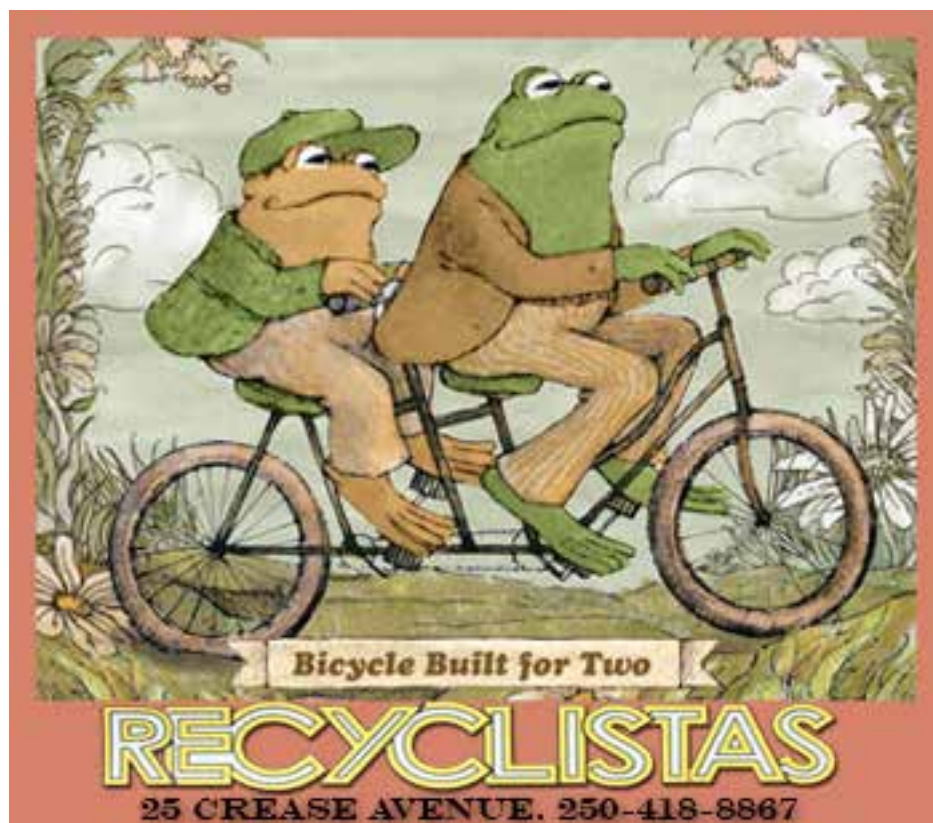
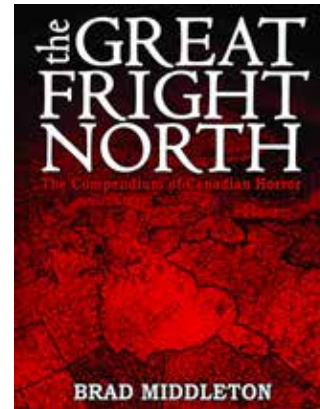
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been lucky enough to meet many superb artists over the years who have been kind enough to share their ideas and tricks with me, and this has not only improved the quality of my work, it also made it easier to get a good result. Technique is EVERYTHING!

AU: Any advice for new tattoo artists just starting out?

Voodoo: I think my main piece of advice for anyone, starting out or not, would be to never be satisfied. If you look at your work and marvel at how good you are getting, you will stop improving. Only by being critical and studying the work of the really great artists in the world can you improve and grow. Of course, if your technique is wrong or ineffective, all the self-criticism and reflection in the world will not help you improve. It is vital to get your information from someone who is capable of turning out excellent quality work, otherwise you will learn bad habits and this will slow your progress.

AU: What's the craziest request for a tattoo you have ever gotten?

Voodoo: Impossible to answer. Basically anyone who requests a tattoo without really considering the way it will look, just the meaning behind it, is a crazy request to me. It happens every day and it always amazes me!

AU: Plans for the future? Final words for people reading this?

Voodoo: I would like to thank all my clients here in Victoria for making me feel welcome, as well as many artists and shops in the area who have offered help or encouragement, and would like to invite all those who have not yet discovered Oak Bay's best kept secret to drop by and discuss any ideas you may have. Let's see what we can come up with!

More information at:

www.voodooartattoo.com

Facebook: Voodoo Tattoo Barcelona



Voodoo Tattoo

Interview by Ira Hunter

Absolute Underground: Introduce yourself to the fine people of Canada.

Voodoo: Hi. My name is Voodoo (I have been called that for 28 years and it has now become my name). I have been tattooing for 23 years, mostly in Barcelona, Spain where I have had the city's best-known shop for the last twenty years. Recently, my wife and I decided to move away from crisis-torn Spain and return to Victoria, where life is a little more relaxed and the people are a little happier. We have now been living here for the last nine months and are very happy.

AU: How did you get started tattooing?

Voodoo: When I decided to move to Spain in 1991, I realized that I would need to get a job, so since I had been doing graphic design and air-brush work in the previous years, I traded in my airbrush equipment and bought tattooing equipment instead. There it started.

AU: What styles does you specialize in?

Voodoo: I love doing photo-realistic work. I can't help but feel that if the tattoo is based on a real photo it will always look better than my drawn version. I also specialize in black and grey work, although I love doing color as well. Basically, I strive to produce a piece which will turn heads and stand out from the crowd of other tattoo work that is out there.

AU: Where are you currently located ?

Voodoo: I have rented a shop at 2250 Oak Bay Ave, in the courtyard of Monterey Mews. This location is a bit hidden away and off the main strip, but I like it like that. It means that people have to find me, and that way I eliminate all the looky-loos and price-shoppers. Basically, if someone sees my work and likes it, they will take the time and effort to find me, and once they do, I find it easier to discuss any modifications to the design as they are usually set on getting their tattoo from me and will not just turn around and go to the shop next door if I ask to make changes to the design or idea.

AU: What made you decide to move from Spain to Victoria?

Voodoo: Spain has been suffering dreadfully in the last few years from the economic crisis in Europe, and although my heart goes out to those poor people, I just couldn't see any real future in living there. With 40% unemployment and a corrupt government, it is almost impossible to make a future for yourself there. My wife and I therefore decided to move back to Victoria after 23 years of living in Spain.

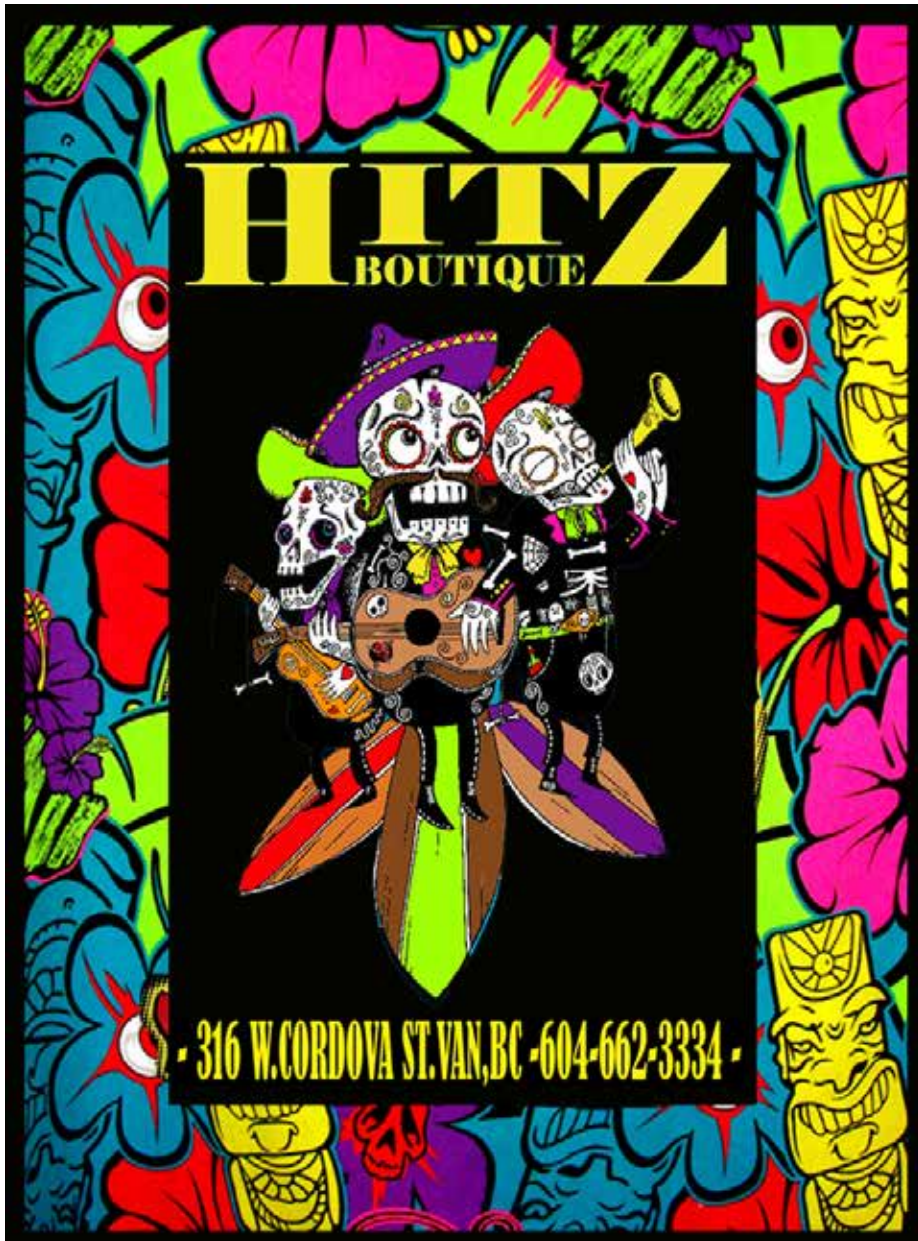
AU: What makes your shop unique?

How would you describe your shop's style?

Voodoo: My 'shop' is actually just a small studio where I can serve my clients and do my work quietly and in peace. After 20 years of working in/owning a large and loud shop right in downtown Barcelona, I was really looking forward to working in a quieter atmosphere. My Victoria clients seem to love the intimacy and relaxing atmosphere, and I can concentrate much better without all the distractions of a big shop.

AU: Do you incorporate any secret techniques when doing a portrait tattoo?

Voodoo: Yes, but they are not my secrets. I have



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Mr. Plow vs. Mick Foley

Interview by Mr. Plow

Absolute Underground: Who are you and what do you do?

Mick Foley: I'm a former WWE wrestler-turned-author who has now taken his stories from the written page onto the live stage.

AU: What made you decide to go into stand-up comedy?

MF: Well, it's more I just want to reassure people that [my performance is] wrestling stories and not jokes. They are funny stories and they are stories that I have worked on and have tried to perfect, so that when I come to Canada, people will be seeing a performance that has been worked on. It will be a high quality, very professional show, not a guy winging it or telling one-liners.

AU: And you have been at this now for a good year or so, if not more than that?

MF: Four and half years, and really, really working

hard for the last two... I realized I really owed it to the audiences to have stories that have been worked on... [stories] that made people laugh and wince and cry and do all the great things that a movie should.

AU: Right. Would somebody who is not a fan of wrestling enjoy the show?

MF: It's usually a spouse or significant other who is dragged against their will, or in a dramatic show of love and support, who ends up nonetheless really enjoying themselves. And I know it sounds strange, coming from a wrestler whose stories revolve around graphic injuries, but there is an underlying warmth that makes everyone feel welcome. I take a lot of pride in making people feel comfortable at my shows.

AU: Do you have any plans to maybe record a comedy special, or release a DVD/CD like all these comedians are doing?

MF: Yeah, well WWE just rolled out their plans for their 24-hour-a-day network. They have recorded a couple of my shows, so that's the obvious choice, but we also have offers. I've been waiting for WWE but we've had legitimate offers and the show will be available within the next year, in some form. Whether it's Netflix, DVD, streaming online or a comedy special, it will be out there and my feeling is, knowing that people leave the shows every night going, "Wow, that was a lot better than I thought it was going to be," that once people see the show, they will want to be part of it when it comes to their town. It will be a different show by that time but they will get the feel for what the show is like.

AU: Do you miss throwing punches and chairs and getting bloody and screaming, "Bang bang!"?

MF: No! I don't. Only because these shows really do make me feel like I used to feel when I was in the ring, like the punches and the chairs and the blood was all a means to an end, which was connecting with an audience and getting reactions and putting on a show, and you know, these one-man shows have given me an opportunity to experience the same things I

loved about wrestling, without the emergency room visits.

AU: What else do you have up your sleeve in the future? You've conquered wrestling, you're a bestselling author, you're crushing the comedy club circuit, you gotta have some plans.

MF: I've got a series of comic books I have written for WWE, I've got another children's book in the works, I'm taking on a play written by Dee Snider of Twisted Sister fame, he has written... a new classic in seasonal entertainment and it's getting its first two month run in Chicago, and I am going to be his Santa Clause for at least three weeks of that run, and that's before my documentary on Santa Clause comes out, at about the same time. I'm a producer on and off, and have been working hard on, did I just say hard on? I did!

AU: Hey, it's an alternative magazine, you can even swear if you want to.

MF: Working diligently on... and that's pretty full plate... There really is never a dull moment. I

MR PLOWS PICK

return home, I got four kids, got my plate full around the world.

AU: Lastly, shamelessly promote whatever you want the readers to know now, websites, anything.

MF: To see the upcoming dates, it's realmickfoley.com. Click on events, it's pretty easy, I keep it real. Twitter is @realmickfoley, Facebook, www.facebook.com/realmickfoley. Leave a comment and check up on me, I'm always into something new.

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Broken Neck Radio's Afia Dash chats with Biff Byford, Vocalist of Saxon- the following interview adapted from the original audio interview published on www.brokenneckradio.com

Afia Dash: Well hello, this is Afia Dash from Broken Neck Radio... How are you?

Biff Byford: I'm fine, thank you!

AD: Thanks for taking the time to chat with us... Where in England are you right now?

BB: I'm in my studio in Yorkshire.

AD: We are HUGE Saxon fans here at the station... It's been a wonderful journey for



you so far; 35 years and 20 albums... How do you feel the metal scene has evolved over those years?

BB: Well, it's certainly gone through some big changes, that's for sure... but it really depends on how people have perceived metal... My perception of it is very broad; you see... where others are more narrow. We as a band flip back and forth between heavy metal and the traditional heavy metal... I suppose our trademark over the years has

been very athletic guitar riffs within our songs... that's where our uniqueness comes from, I think.

AD: In the beginning, there were no real metal band influences before you... so how did growing up in Yorkshire influence Saxon and its formation?

BB: It was a hard upbringing, you either worked in the coal mines or the textile mills... So a very harsh industrial environment. I think it was mostly that we didn't want to follow our fathers' footsteps down into the coalmines... although I wasn't old enough to fully participate in the music explosion of the 60s, I can say that it definitely influenced me when it comes to my music.

AD: I have to ask about my all-time favourite, "Denim and Leather"- it's one I consider to be an anthem of metal.

BB: It is definitely an anthem. When I meet more modern bands... they always reference that one as an influence for them, especially in the late 80s and early 90s... We were one of the first bands to write about our audience... in the 80s there were no real rules and we wrote especially from the gut back then... it also was one of our earlier

successes, and I believe it really established us.

AD: Do you ever get tired of playing that song live?

BB: No, not at all, it's part of our DNA as a band... if we ever removed that from our setlist, I don't think the audience would be happy... I feel the songs more belong to the fans now.

AD: 35 years, 20 albums, so many songs... how do you create your setlists, with so many to choose from?

BB: There're a few ways now... for a while there, we had fans vote for the songs they wanted [to see] prior to the show... or the fans would start chanting a song and we would then play it for them... you see, when you have 8900+ people chanting, "Denim and Leather!", you're going to have to play it at some time... "Crusader" is another popular one... to be fair, we have to play at least one song from every great album.

AD: The new album, *Sacrifice*, sounds like authentic Saxon... how do you stay true to Saxon with all the newer bands floating around?

BB: Generally, 99% of our songs are written for us and the fans and not for anyone else... We write songs, hit the studio, bang them out, then move along and never spend intense amounts of time on any specific area of the recording process.

AD: Speaking of writing, do you write all the lyrics?

BB: Yes, I write all the lyrics for our songs. Sometimes the band would chip in, but we stopped that and let them focus on riffs.

AD: *Sacrifice* is your 20th album and you produced it; what made you decide to produce this one?

BB: I've produced other albums with other people... I decided to produce this one myself... I liked it because I had

full control of the entire process.

AD: How have the lineup changes affected Saxon over the years?

BB: The only real change was the drumming change in the 80s- it brought a more stylized form of drumming to the band... Our third lineup wasn't very good in terms of chemistry, I felt... the new lineup now though is the longest and greatest lineup, in my opinion.

AD: Wacken is coming up on its 25th anniversary- will you be participating?

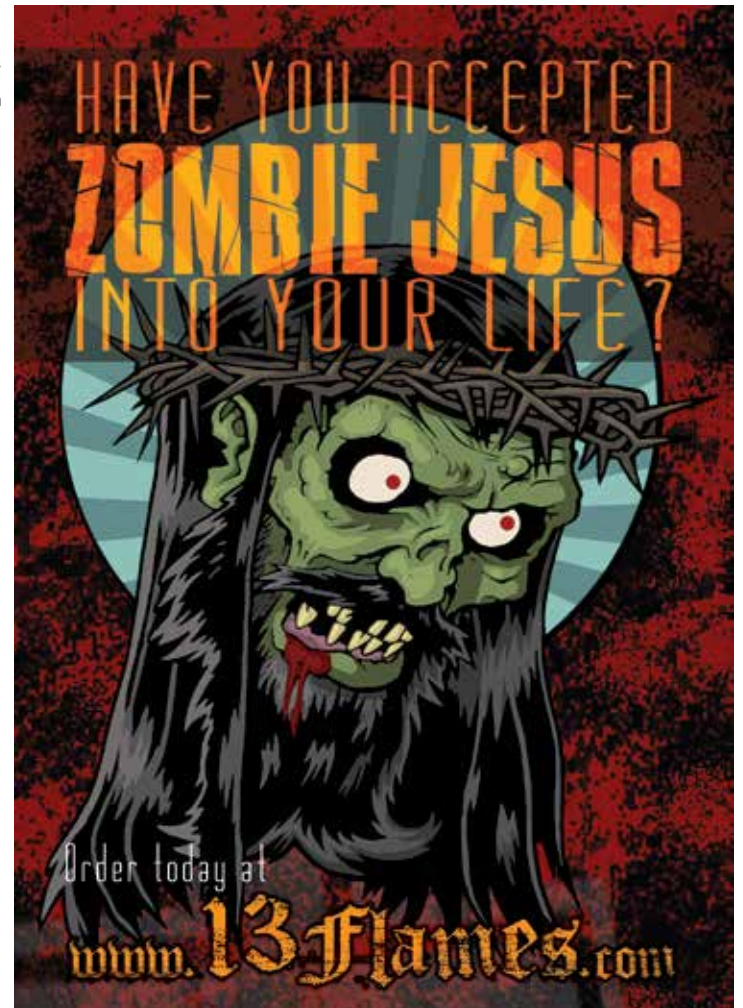
BB: [long pause] Uh... we might be playing, I can say...

AD: Well Biff, thanks for taking the time to chat with us here at Broken Neck Radio.

BB: You're welcome, and thanks for having me on the show.

Original interview:

www.brokenneckradio.com



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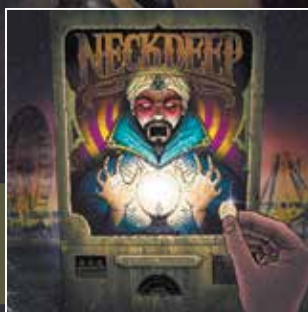


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SHRED SESSION



Smiling Buddha Cafe

The only indoor skate ramp/
restaurant in downtown Vancouver

By Matt Gordon

This past weekend, I skated down to East Hastings and Columbia to check out a former legendary music venue in downtown Vancouver, "The Smiling Buddha Cabaret," which has since been converted into a 60-foot-long half pipe and is a hidden skate haven for a rainy Vancouver day or night.

Absolute Underground: Ok, so Malcolm and Andrew right?

A: You got it.

AU: Alright, so what is this place anyway? What do you have here?



A: This is the SBC Restaurant / Restauramp / Ramparaunt, in the building that formerly held the Smiling Buddha Cabaret.

AU: What's the former Smiling Buddha Cabaret?

A: The Cabaret was a venue that has been around since the 50s... and it's basically been a local Vancouver music venue and hub for 50 years before it closed in '96.

AU: What do you guys have going on here right now?

M: Today we've got chili, grilled cheese, skateboarding, and some live music this evening.

AU: What kinds of things do you sell here?

A: We've got Skull gear, we can fix boards up if guys break anything or girls break anything when they're riding. Ah we've got good homemade

food that's affordable and we're starting to book entertainment nightly, more or less. There's always something going on, tons of art on the walls and people should come by and check it out.

AU: How do you guys like this location? East Hastings and Columbia?

M: I like it, man. You know, it's got a huge sense of community, more so than any place I've lived before. It's pretty tight-knit.

A: Main and Hastings made our business idea viable. The locals and the neighbourhood have been very supportive and we're doing our best here to host a business that's inclusive.

AU: What are the specs of the ramp?

A: It's 60 feet long, it's all one radius, we've got pool coping, three-foot to four-foot elevators on both sides. Big deck on one side for standing on,

smaller deck on the other for wallrides. We've got a big wallride, and we've got 30 feet of pool coping at vert.

AU: How did this place look before you got your hands on it?

M: Super gnarly



A: You wouldn't have wanted to be in here. We worked in the shithole for 14-15 months on a generator with no power and it was... rough.

AU: Well it looks great now, you guys have everything, WiFi, full kitchen, couches...

A: We've got board games and puzzles too. Crosswords.

AU: Ya I know, you had to kick me out last night, I was having fun ramp-partying.

www.sbcrestaurant.com



DJ Zang of Broken Neck Radio talks to Paul Bostaph about what got him into metal, when they are hitting the studio for new Slayer, fondest memory of Jeff H, and much, much more.

Absolute Underground: Hi Paul, how are you doing?

Paul Bostaph: I'm doing great, how are you doing?

to be only \$50, so I made that decision solely [based] on cash!

AU: So how old were you when you first got behind that kit?

PB: 15

AU: And do you remember it like it was yesterday?

PB: Do I remember age 15 like it was yesterday? Haha, I don't know about that... I do, however, remember starting and what I had to go through to get to band practice and things like that, you know. It's kind of funny when I think about it: my dad used to have this old wheelbarrow and I used to take my drums, because

I didn't have a driver's license, I would stack my drums into the wheelbarrow and wheel the drums down to my friend's house... so to think about it now, I did some pretty crazy stuff back then, just to get to practice.

AU : The DMAN, host of the Wednesday

good brothers?

PB: Well, it's amazing to be back, I never really thought I would be back, you know ... you never put that in your mind... Life is funny that way, when you find yourself back somewhere you never thought you would be... I am very happy to be back in Slayer though, [it's] great to be playing with Tom and Kerry again, and Gary as well ... and we all wish that Jeff was here, but we are definitely going to carry on.

AU: In a recent Loudwire article, Tom mentioned there were some previously-recorded tracks that were left over from Jeff before his passing. Have you had the chance to listen to those tracks?

PB: I haven't heard the tracks yet... I do know they are not completed... I'm not sure what's going to happen with them yet. I do know we are working around the idea of reworking them, and possibly having them on the new record. I don't know if that's going to happen or not... I think we are going to try, but you see, Jeff was such an incredible songwriter... that even what he has now is probably just brilliant... we can definitely finish it for him... we will just see what happens.

AU: You guys are touring quite a bit, even with the lineup changes. How would you describe what keeps Slayer, one of the Big Four right there, going 100 miles an hour?

PB: Well all of us are fans of heavy metal, you know, that's first and foremost... So I mean that's the driving force right there... being a fan of the music and loving what we do... Personally, I'm a junkie for the feeling of getting up there playing this music... even if it's at band practice, it's an

we know you can't drop everything and go running to the studio, but do you guys have any update at all on the new record? And if so, is there any form of update you can feed us dying-hungry Slayer fans?

PB: I don't have anything 'official' to say [about] when we are going to be in the studio. I hope that it is real soon... I know that Kerry and I have both demo-ed up about eleven songs now, and [we have] a couple more we will be playing around with... Kerry has some more ideas to utilize, and of course whatever Jeff had... Ideally, we would love to get in in January... but I just don't know yet... it really is based on the availability of the producer and a lot of other factors I'm not quite aware of yet.

AU: Going back through the entire Slayer catalogue, what is your favorite Slayer song or songs to play live?

PB: Wow, that's a hard question to answer because there are so many that are fun to play ... *Ghost of War* comes to mind, *Hallowed Point*, *War Ensemble*, I could go on and on... any song in the set I love to play.

AU: Do you have any pre-rituals you do to get warmed up before you get behind the kit?

PB: Yeah, typical stuff, I have a practice kit backstage... I use weighted drumsticks, ankle weights on my feet, get the muscles going...

AU: If you were to give up-and-coming drummers any advice on how to become successful, what advice would you give them?

PB: Most importantly, keep the best attitude; it's not always the best drummer that gets the gig, it's the right drummer... And of course, practice your



AU: I'm doing great, and thanks again for taking the time to sit down and chat with us. I'll get right to it, as I know you're a really busy guy. We all have that first metal band we listened to, but what was the first metal band that SERIOUSLY got you into metal?

PB: Wow, hmmm... Iron Maiden. Iron Maiden's Killers album... When I first heard that album, that was it for me.

AU: We heard that your first interest was actually bass guitar; what was the reason you decided to drop the bass and go straight to the drums?

PB: Well, actually I never picked up the bass. wanted to be a bass player, but when I finally priced out both a bass guitar and amp, it was going to cost \$250... at that young age, I didn't have that kind of money. A drum kit turned out

Whiplash show, asked me to ask you if you're just as happy with your drumming now as you were when you first started?

PB: Ah, well when I first started, I sucked! I'm a much better drummer now, but I'm never happy [with] where I'm at as a musician, that's just kind of how you evolve. If you become happy [with] how you play, you can become too settled into one thing. I just think your playing would become stagnant. Me, personally, I don't like where I'm at as a drummer, so I keep adding new things to my playing... sometimes that's easy, sometimes that's hard. I guess I'm just too much of a perfectionist at heart.

AU: Well it's official, you're 100% back ... this is your third stint with Slayer. How does it feel to be back? Was it like coming back to visit some

incredible rush, and when you get off stage it's a very gratifying feeling.

AU: What is your fondest memory of Jeff?

PB: I have a lot of fond memories of Jeff ... one that comes to mind is: we were on stage and it was a very hot gig... I turned around to towel myself off and I could suddenly feel this cold shower of liquid on my back... it was so cold it kind of shocked me. I turned around and Jeff was just standing there with a beer in his hand... he had taken a swig of his beer and was spitting it on my back. A couple songs later I had a big ole cup of ice water and I spat that on his back... it was fun because Jeff always had fun on stage. Jeff had fun with everything... that's my fondest memory of Jeff; he was always trying to have fun.

AU: Well, you did lose a brother in metal, so

ass off... don't just stay in your rehearsal studio, get into a band and play live.

AU: Lastly... how does it feel to have the craziest fucking fans in the world?

PB: It's the fucking best thing ever! I mean, when we come into the venue every night, we can hear people out of nowhere yelling "SLAYER!" Or when Tom steps up to the mic, and the fans start chanting... it's like a battle-cry. I mean, before I first joined the band, I used to go to Slayer shows and I was one of those guys chanting it... I had fun doing it, and I know as a fan it feels good to know the band you admire so much will never sell out.

Zang can be heard every Thursday and Friday Night after 8pm PST on Broken Neck Radio

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Interview by Lucius Blackworth

Lucius Blackworth of Broken Neck Radio talks with Scott Hendrick from SkeletoNwitch.

Adapted from the live interview published on www.brokenneckradio.com

Lucius Blackworth: How are you doing?

Scott Hendrick: I'm doing excellent man, happy to be here.

LB: How's the tour and travels been so far?

SH: It's been killer, the shows have been great, the response to the album's been awesome, kids have been going crazy at the shows, the weather's been co-operating, for winter, we narrowly missed some dangerous storms through the mountains, so everything's been great. We head back to the US tomorrow to round out the second half of the tour.

LB: Theoretical question, let's say something does go incredibly wrong, you guys slide off the side of a mountain, it's brutal, the van rolls a whole bunch of times, there's gear everywhere and you guys are stranded for a couple days... How many songs do you think you guys could write, based on that brutality until you were rescued?

SH: Probably none, 'cause I'd be dead... haha I don't know, I'd have to be in that situation, but I guess the first thing on my mind when we're dying, starving, freezing to death on the side of a mountain the first thing I would think of would probably not be, "I should write a song about this." I'd probably be thinking of how I could keep myself alive.

LB: Brings me to my next question, who would you eat first?

SH: Good question... it depends what you're going for, Nate's the biggest guy, Evan's probably the leanest guy, well he's the most fit, the most muscle-y, and I'm probably the guy that would say, "Just fuckin' eat me first, guys. I'll take one for the team."

LB: That's good of you. It seems like you guys have been through some lineup changes over the years, how have you found that affects the music and the creative process?

SH: Nate and Chance and I have been in the band since the beginning, the three of us, so the core hasn't really changed. It's not like at any point we lost a major songwriter or a super driving creative force behind the band. Not to say that everyone doesn't put their stamp on things and have their two cents and work together, but when we write stuff... Nate is the main songwriter, he writes more stuff than I do, but between the two of us there ends up being a demo track with a programmed

drum machine and two guitar tracks and we build on that. And that's always been there, so each drummer (we've had two drummers) has been able to put their stamp on it... and three bass players, though the thing about that is that Evan's been our bass player for over six years... so really we haven't had a lineup change in years. That doesn't even feel like a rocky road, it was just kind of finding our footing for the band and then we were off to the races.

LB: Why do you think so many metal bands go through drummers?

SH: Probably because their job is really, really demanding physically. It's tough to play drums in a metal band, you have to be very, very good and practice a lot... and then you're in a metal band, which means you don't make any money, and then you realize that you've devoted so much of your time and your soul, heart, blood, sweat and tears to something, and at first it was all about the music, but at a certain point as you get older, I'm guessing a lot of these guys start to get jaded and pissed and bummed out that they've sacrificed this much time and work to something and they're on food stamps, you know? So I think that has to do with the high turnover to be honest.

LB: So the new album is out, *Serpents Unleashed*, and that's the fifth studio album by SkeletoNwitch, is that correct?

SH: It is...

LB: It seems like you guys are getting a lot more credibility and admiration for this particular album, how's the response been so far and what was it like to work with Kurt Ballou?

SH: The response has been great... it's overwhelmingly positive, which is awesome. As Chance, our singer, has said before, when you're putting out a record, it's like your kid and you don't want anyone to tell you it's ugly or it's failing in school. You want everybody to like it. But at the same time, you can't control what people think and do and how they feel about it. So it's great that people are stoked about it, and working with Kurt was awesome. We've almost recorded with Kurt in a few other instances, but usually what got in the way was just him being on the road with Converge, and us having multiple options... this time we said, no we want Kurt, let's just make sure he's going to be around... and it was awesome, he did a fantastic job, a lot of credit goes to Kurt... We wrote the songs and his production really gave them teeth, brought them to life... made them fit the band better than any production has yet, and I think that connection of just getting better as songwriters and having production that matches



what we need, that's why we're getting these great reviews... I think that everything just lined up really well.

LB: You guys have been touring, you've played with some huge acts... in your younger days, it's a lot easier to keep that anger and that fire in your music. What do you guys do now to make sure you're still alive and extremely brutal on stage?

SH: We write music that we're stoked to play, and then we play it. We still love doing it... we love doing what we do, so there's not some trick to getting stoked. You should be stoked to be playing the music you've created... I think Nate said it really well one day when someone said, "Who's your favourite band?" and he said, "SkeletoNwitch! I don't mean to sound like an asshole, but if I didn't love my band and I wasn't writing the music I wanted to hear, why am I doing it?" And I agree with Nate, not in the sense of, "We're the best band ever!", it's just that we love what we do, we write the music we wanna hear, so we get stoked, we have energy, we're amped to get on stage every day and play that for people because we love doing it. And a few beers help.

LB: I've got a question here for you from the Asian Invasion, he's the host of our Monday Metal Mayhem here on Broken Neck Radio, and he has said, "Your rise to fame over the last few years has been huge- what do you guys have in store for 2014?"

SH: 2014? A lot of touring, just lots of touring. That's funny that he said our "rise to fame", that's really funny. We're going to go to Australia, New Zealand, hopefully we can get to Japan and South America. We already have tours booked in the US, where we're going to tour with Enslaved and Amon Amarth. We're going to the UK and Europe with Overkill... Just hard work.

LB: What's been your favourite experience so far?

SH: That's a tough question? What's been the best experience of your life?

LB: The best experience of my life has been being able to perform in front of thousands of people and, at a flick of your wrist, having all those people give you praise, no matter how vulgar and gross you are to the people out there because they just love you so much,

that's the best experience of my life.

SH: Wow! Well you know, there's not one moment that just stands out... I'm not that type of dude, I don't gauge my life with numbers or achievements, I'm just stoked that we're still able to do what we love, and that we still love doing it, and that we're able to make this our living... in general, the fact that we're doing this is awesome... we still get to do what we love for a living and that's amazing. I know that's kind of a bullshit answer, but I guess I'm a bullshitter...

LB: What has been your craziest, wildest moment while you were on tour, what's the most insane thing that's happened to you?

SH: There's just all the wild stuff... It's certainly not the days of Van Halen and the fuckin' Palladium anymore, but it's still sex, drugs and rock'n roll if you look, it's just a little dingier, a little shittier and a little cheaper, but that stuff still exists and we've seen plenty of ridiculous shit, but I'm not gonna further that whole stigma farther than it needs to be... we've seen some things.... Come out to a show and see for yourself.

LB: How do you guys stay so fucking awesome all the time?

SH: I don't know, we've never seen us on stage, so you just mean like our albums or just in general?

LB: Just in general, you seem like a pretty stand-up guy, you're pretty clean-cut from what I can tell, you guys can't see him right now but he's pretty clean-cut.

SH: He's so handsome, this guy... No it was funny the other day, I was like, "Hey, what are you doing?" and Nate is like, "I'm just gonna sit here and rule." Haha that's what we're trying to do, just hang out and rule.

LB: Just be fuckin' awesome by default, right?

SH: Precisely. That's the goal.

LB: Awesome. Well thanks for doing the interview, appreciate it.

SH: My pleasure.

More information and tour dates at:

<http://www.skeletoNwitch.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/skeletoNwitchmetal>



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ARTIST PROFILE



Alison Lilly

Interview by Willow Gamberg

Absolute Underground: Who are you and what are you most famous for?

Alison Lilly: I am a painter/illustrator and tattoo artist from Vancouver, B.C. People might recognize the illustration and print work I have done for bands. I have also participated in numerous art exhibits locally and abroad.

AU: What mediums do you work in? How would you describe your style?

AL: I really enjoy mixed media. For my illustration and painting work, I usually use a mix of ink and acrylic washes. I would describe my style as illustrative/figurative; my illustration work is quite

detailed, [while] my painting work varies more. I still have quite a bit of detail in my paintings: I can be more free in my technique and employ a lot of texture using different mediums such as ink washes etc. I have also dabbled in digital photo manipulation, but I prefer drawing and painting.

AU: How long have you been an artist? Have you always been based in Vancouver?

AL: I was born and raised in Vancouver and have been drawing and painting from a young age. I am very lucky to have parents who encouraged and supported my creative endeavours. I received a diploma in Fine Arts in 2007, and have been working professionally as an artist for ten years now. I started my tattoo apprenticeship in November 2012, and recently started working full time at Next Tattoo in Vancouver. In the future, I

look forward to traveling more with my art, participating in more group exhibits and doing tattoo guest spots abroad.

AU: Do you have any particular inspirations for your work?

AL: I take a lot of inspiration from music, film and literature. I gain inspiration from other artists' work constantly. I have a great group of peers who I work with, as well. There are too many to name!

AU: You've done lots of work for local metal bands and shows... tell us about that! Why do you like doing work for bands... are you inspired by certain kinds of music?

AL: Working with bands has been great so far! I really enjoy collaborating with musicians and getting inspired from their music, lyrical themes and concepts. I enjoy when I am given total artistic freedom to go wild on a piece, as well. It is very rewarding to work in both capacities. I am focusing on tattooing at the moment, so I have scaled back my workload with band commissions. I am more selective with who I work with, but this type of work is something I will be doing for a long time to come. I listen to a lot of different types of music and am constantly inspired by it. When I work with bands, I sometimes listen to their music to gain more inspiration. This is especially helpful if I am given free reign on the work and I need concept inspiration for it.

AU: Is there a piece you've done that you're most proud of?

AL: I really enjoyed my work for the band Ancients' album art last year. The project was quite extensive. It was a collaborative effort, I worked with the band in studio on concept development and then spent two months creating the paintings. The painting for the album inlay is quite large (5x3.5 ft) It was a really rewarding experience - I hope to work more in this capacity in the future, on concept albums and such.

AU: Any particular goals for your art/career?

AL: My main goal is to get better and grow as a tattoo artist. That is my most important goal for the long term. I really enjoy tattooing so far, it has been very challenging and rewarding.

AU: Any words of wisdom about the Vancouver scene, or advice for the up-and-comers?

AL: I think the Vancouver music scene has flourished in recent years, especially within the heavy music genres. There are a lot of great local bands playing and touring outside of Vancouver. It is great to see that growth and change, now we just need more live music venues for heavy bands!

My advice to any up-and-coming artists working with bands is to develop your own style and not copy or imitate other artists, or the 'popular' styles of the time. We are all inspired by other artists. I see a lot of the same themes and style over and over, it gets boring.



in Absolute Underground!

To check out more of my work visit: www.alisonlilly.com

My tattoos and band pics on instagram: [@a_lilly_art](https://www.instagram.com/a_lilly_art)

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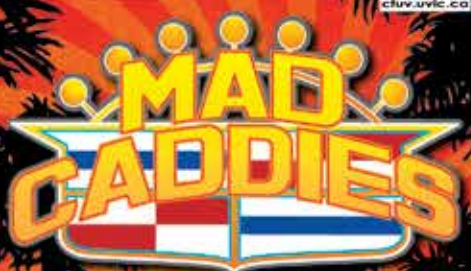
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KEN mode

Interview by Michael Luis

Formed by brothers Jesse and Shane Matthewson, Winnipeg's KEN mode have been terrorizing eardrums with their potent blend of noise, sludge-metal, and blistering hardcore since 1999. After winning the inaugural Heavy Metal/Hard Music Juno in 2012, the power-trio, which now features bassist Andrew LaCour, has toured relentlessly. This year, the band released their sixth LP, *Entrench*, which has received overwhelming critical acclaim. Absolute Underground's Michael Luis caught up with frontman Jesse last year in Victoria.

Absolute Underground: You guys have done some big tours both as the headliner (such as this one) and as support. How do the two experiences differ? Is there more pressure or less pressure headlining?

Jesse Matthewson: In terms of draw, there's obviously more pressure, but I think the shows are a lot more relaxed because we don't really have to mess around; we show up, we load in at a leisurely pace, we sound-check, we can eat something hopefully decent. It's nice not having to rush all your

stuff off stage.

AU: With the latest album, *Entrench*, you guys have received a lot of critical praise, and rightfully so. One of the places where it received accolades was the taste-making American site, Pitchfork. And you guys played their festival—

JM: We did. I think if we were a jangly indie-rock band, we'd be reaping a lot of that praise a lot better.

AU: That's the thing, is that the festival that didn't have many heavy bands? There was Trash Talk, and then Vancouver's White Lung, who we know well around these parts.

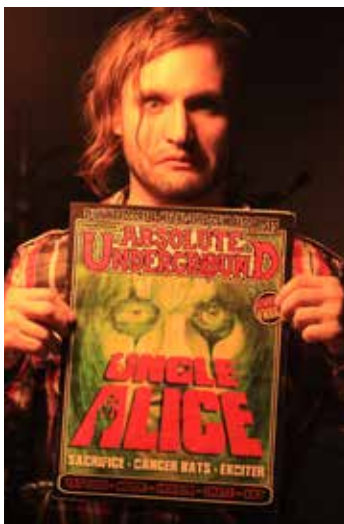
JM: And they're not even really considered a heavy band.

AU: Yeah, like more punk. Is playing to an outsider crowd like that a challenge you embrace or is it a little bit nerve-wracking?

JM: Yeah, it was definitely not nerve-wracking. We just showed up and did our thing and hammed it up as much as possible. I honestly didn't really care if people liked us or not. But it was fun; the fest was really well-organized and it had a really neat lineup, but whether or not we won over new fans, who knows? It's yet to be seen.

AU: Well, do you get a lot of people saying, "Hey, I normally don't listen to this kind of music, but I really like you guys."?

JM: It's been happening more and



more, yeah. It's cool that people are being open-minded enough to listen to something that's a little heavier and off the beaten path because I know that we draw from a lot of different areas of heavy music, and indie rock, rock'n roll, et cetera. I've never really identified with the metal scene anyways. And I know straight metal-heads don't like us. Fuck them [laughs].

AU: Something you guys did on the new album was featured moments with two bass guitars. Is this something you hope to utilize moving forward? Because it's a very unique musical aesthetic.

JM: It's something I've wanted to do for a long time. It just never really worked out, but this time it did. It sounded too heavy not to follow with it.

AU: This is mainly a music magazine, and you guys get featured lots in music publications. However, you guys were recently featured in Forbes, a big-time business publication. Was

it an interesting to talk about that side of the band, the non-musical side of things?

JM: We'd talked about that the side of the music industry in a fair number of interviews, but never with a business-oriented magazine which was the trippy part. Having been through business school, I don't feel that what we're doing is anything too crazy, but I guess I take for granted what our training is.

AU: With that, any final remarks?

JM: I hope [our fans in Victoria] have checked out the record and dig it. Tell a friend. Keep us on the road, not starving [laughs].

For more information, check out www.ken-mode.com

For a longer version of this interview, check out www.michaelaluis.wordpress.com

Photos by Noel Anstey

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Cloven Path Ministries

By Jesus Maggot

"Jesus saves, Satan pays interest". This is first introduction many get to Cloven Path Ministries. Aside, of course, from their Bibles for Porn missionary program... which is exactly what it sounds like. As you can already imagine, this is not your typical Ministry. In fact, this is a ministry dedicated to Satan.

At an event called Something Strange, I watched as Pastor Morgan asked three young men to spit into a cup. After throwing it back, it apparently cured their ailments. I can't attest to the rabies



or to the HPV, but the man with erectile dysfunction surely walked away with a chubby. Dr. Marshall then took blood, yes, real blood, from a young lady and passed the syringe to Pastor Morgan, who then sprayed it all over his face and into his mouth, proudly proclaiming, "I'm not afraid of AIDS!" Over the course of the next year, I have been privy to several Cloven Path Revivals. I've seen everything from Wilkes fucking the corpse of a dead girl back to life, healing a man from his colostomy bag and more... just YouTube it.

Last November, CPM launched the RoFo bus tour, which Wilkes describes as a "tribute to our beloved mayor, RoFo". The tour took passangers aboard a revival meeting on wheels, and stopped along the infamous sites synonymous with the Ford Crack Scandal. When the bus arrived for its final stop at Douglas B. Ford park, the tour was met with a Rob Ford impersonator who would come stumbling out of the woods in a drunken stupor. This is where Mayor Ford's brother, Doug showed up.

Doug came across very cool to the TV reporters, though it seems that after we left, Doug

confronted the Rob Ford Impersonator, Dave McKay a.k.a. Sketchy the Clown, who was stationed outside the park keeping warm in Victor Marshall's 1990 Volvo. The cul de sac also overlooked the Ford family homestead. The Ford brothers intimidated McKay and pursued him in their Escalade after he

volunteered to leave the cul de sac. A low-speed chase ensued, ending with a six-cruiser takedown of the Volvo. It seems that brother Doug lied and called police, saying that McKay was snapping

pictures of his mother's house and harrassing her. The cops laughed it off after Wilkes explained the situation.

What really amazed me was the amount of press involved. In a single day, I saw reporters from City TV, VICE, Ruptly TV, The Toronto Star, Al Jazeera and several lesser-known publications on the tour. A quick Google search shows CPM being mentioned as far off as Washington DC and Tampa Bay, Florida.

Now don't go thinking these folks are assosiated with the Church of Satan. In fact, according to Marshall, they perfer to be called "devilists". They state that the COS is yesterday's Devil. "Today's Devil wants you to hold a position of high influence, wealth and power," says Wilkes. Which makes sense as to why they are such

TORONTO TRASH



huge Rob Ford supporters.

Now this is, of course, satire, though you'll never get Pastor Morgan to admit to it. Just try asking him... won't happen. He swears to be from Hooker, Oklahoma where he led a devil-less life and was, as he puts it, "...repossessed later in Grimsby." For more information on CPM, check out their website at clovenpath.com. Now somebody praise the Devil!

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Rambling with Ruleta Rusa

Interview by Anita Fixx

Ruleta Rusa (Russian Roulette in Spanish) are a punk band from sunny California. They were in Montreal this past November to play at Varning Fest. The show they put on was fucking amazing and certainly one of the best performances I've seen this year. I got the chance to talk to them in both English and Spanish, here's how it went:

Absolute Underground: Alright so what's your name and what do you do?

Jose: I'm Jose and I sing.

Josh: I play the drums. Andrew, our guitarist, is somewhere around here, we think. We also have a second guitarist, Georgia, and our buddy Nate is filling in for bass for this show.

AU: So how did you get started with this band, Ruleta Rusa?

Jose: It started with Ruidos; our friend AJ dropped out of the band pretty early, so we started Ruleta Rusa. We're the only originals from Ruidos.

Josh: Anyway we've known each other for over five years, we've played in bands together, and

a mutual friend said they were looking for a drummer, so we started playing.

AU: So how did you decide on the name Ruleta Rusa?

Jose: I always thought it would be really cool to have the name Ruleta Rusa, but it has a lot of personal stuff in there. Living life every day is like playing a game, you know? You never know where you're going to go. Also my brother passed away so... he shot himself so it's really weird... I like it. I like the name. It has a lot of meaning. This is deeper stuff that I don't like to get into. That's why I don't like interviews.

AU: Well, I'm not going to ask anything you're not comfortable with. Tu puede hacer preguntas en Espanhol? Can I ask you questions in Spanish?

Jose: Por supuesto!

AU: Y como les ha ido aqui en Canada? Este es su primer show?

Jose: Es el primer show en Canada. It's our first East Coast tour.

AU: Si! Y como va la escena alla en California?

Jose: Yo creo que va muy bien! Yo creo que esta major, todos estan haciendo algo. Everybody's busy doing stuff. We have a label, Discos Mierda Mierda so you have the people from LA. Silencio Estetico, he does a lot of bookings in Riverside. So there's a lot of stuff going on! A lot!

Josh: Yeah, we do different stuff to spread the music... You want to hear an Andrew story? We have too many!

AU: Yeah, tell an Andrew story!

Josh: Y cuando el tiene dinero es solo para una noche.

Because...Agh! (When he has money, it's only for one night)

AU: He spends it all on drugs?

Jose: He's a wild beast! He grabbed some cardboard and started to write give me a slap for a dollar. And it had a menu that said...well, you can imagine what it said!

Josh: [The sign said] "I'm raising money to buy more wine. Here are some deals that we could work out for financial compensation. Slap me- 5 dollars, spit on me- 3 dollars, put a cigarette out on me- 3 dollars, helicopter- 5 dollars." He made good money because people felt sorry for him. They would give him money or buy him beer. I think 50 dollars more or less

We were a little worried about him because we

were in Baltimore and it was a little sketchy with old weird guys. And Andrew's outside with his sign on the street!

Jose: This guy came up to him said, "Man, you're a deviant!" A sexual deviant!

AU: Where have you guys been so far?

Josh: We went to Columbia, Mexico, Vancouver, L.A and now the East Coast. And Texas.



AU: How was it in Columbia?

Jose: People are more humble and relaxed!

Josh: Muy divertido. They just want to have a good time and they're happy that a band has come there to see their bands. And come from somewhere else in the world because they don't get a lot of that.

AU: Nice! So you guys want to do more touring in South America?

Jose: Fuck yeah! I wanna go to Brazil! And Puerto Rico. We started a little label and we're releasing a comp soon. It'll be all bands from Columbia like crust, D-beat, street punk, everything! It's all from Columbia, because I think they deserve to be out of the shadows.

AU: When is that coming out?

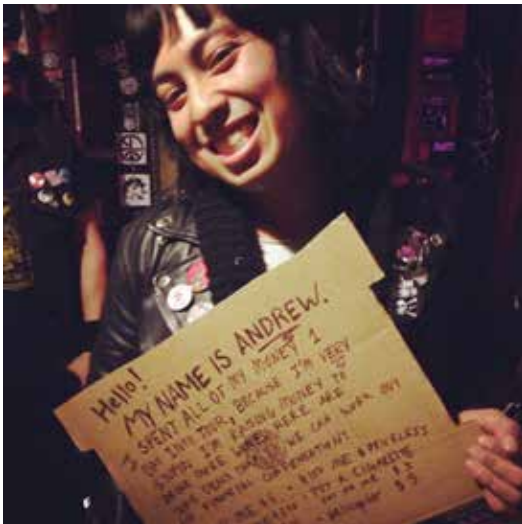
Josh: Next year.

AU: Do you have anything more to say to the people of Canada?

Jose: Gracias por el apoyo, es todo. (Thanks for the support, that's all.)

Josh: Gracias!

PHOTO CREDIT: Anita Fixx





John Longstreth: On Blast Beats and Foundations

Interview by Erik Lindholm

From behind the kit, drummer John Longstreth has seen bands and trends come and go. He has played live and in studio with a dozen bands and currently plays for Origin and Gorguts. The talented and renowned metal player will pass along his techniques and philosophies in an upcoming DVD, recorded in Vancouver. Keep your eyes open for the release date, and read on to hear what it will cover.

AU: There is a drum instructional DVD you have in the works, which was recorded/filmed at The Warehouse in Vancouver, BC. What will you cover on the DVD? What is your goal for the viewer?

John Longstreth: The DVD is a general answer to a large majority of the questions I get through email, Facebook, or on tour. I'm covering some of my more well-known tricks, and trying to explain how to practice these tricks into actual techniques. It's a real low-key, fun DVD, and it's aimed at what a drum clinic from me would look like. It's my personal approach to death metal drums. Endurance, technique, relaxation, there's some warm-up methods I like to use; we cover double strokes, one-handed rolls, various blasting techniques. Basically, how to get comfortable when blast beats and double bass are the meat and potatoes of your playing.

AU: Your schedule in December 2013 looked intense, doing a double header tour with Origin and Gorguts playing the same night! How did you prepare for this challenge?

JL: 2013 was a very successful year for me as far as getting in physical shape. I've been spending a lot of time in Brazilian jiu-jitsu and boxing. I've learned a good deal on health, diet, and physical conditioning. I have always wanted to try a double duty tour ever since I saw Infectious Grooves open up for Suicidal Tendencies in 1993. Also, think about how many musicians in a local bar scene regularly do two or three sets a night. For me, it's a right of passage and an honour.

AU: Is there a pivotal drum lesson, or moment, you can remember experiencing at a young age which was vital to your grasp of drumming? A 'eureka' moment?

JL: My short amount of time with my drum instructor Ray Demarchi. He was my father's regular drummer at the time, and I think I spent

a few months with him and I always felt like I was wasting his time because I was very young. He was the instructor that explained rudiments, proper technique, relaxation, and remaining loose. I don't know if I took away from him what he had technically intended, but I definitely developed a platform on which I base EVERYTHING I do today.

AU: Growing up in Kansas City in a musical family, you had great exposure to jazz. Can you tell us how that shaped your playing and attitudes around drum composition?

JL: Well, the first music I ever heard was jazz and classical. My first

memories are Buddy Rich, Miles Davis, and Frank Zappa. While mom was at work, there was band practice in the house... and funny smelling smoke.

AU: Who is a rock or metal drummer you looked up to as a young player, and why? Who was your first major influence?

JL: Nicko McBrain [Iron Maiden] was the guy that really made me start examining metal and drums. This is early teens. I also started hanging around the drum shop a lot more. Within three months I think I had acquired four Ludwig Speed King bass drum pedals. I wanted to get that McBrain bass drum technique down in the worst way possible. At this point, I started bringing Iron Maiden and Kiss

albums into my drum instructor and felt like I was starting to miss the point. Proper drum instruction soon ended, and I was a full-blast Iron Maiden fan.

AU: The new Gorguts recording has challenged the boundaries of death metal by offering a Tibetan theme. Can you share your drum and percussion goals and approaches for *Coloured Sands*?

JL: With Luc Lemay, Kevin Hufnagel, and Colin Marston standing in the room, the only approach can be listen, learn, ask many questions, and learn some more.

AU: Can you offer a parting message to up-and-coming drummers?

JL: Take some lessons when you're young from a legitimate teacher. You don't have to spend all night and day with this person, but form a base that will allow you to read some music and learn properly. This is similar to the advice that Dave Lombardo gave in Modern Drummer long ago, and it's valid. Listen to everything and everyone. You may see an awful drummer on stage, but you can still learn from him. And leave a tip, don't be a jerk. Thank you very much and hope to see everyone on tour.

Follow John Longstreth at <https://www.facebook.com/johnlongstrethofficial>





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2. Coliseum – Sister Faith
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3. Moths & Locusts – Mission Col-
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(Self-Released)
4. Russian Circles – Memorial
(Sargent House)
5. Black Wizard – Young Wisdom
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Dissension

Interview by Erik Lindholm

Of Time And Chronic Disease is the apt title of Dissension's new record. Inspired by desolate Canadian winters and classic black metal, the young metal band puts forward their initial message to the world... all things must pass, and all that lives must end. Absolute Underground's Erik Lindholm catches up with guitarist Nathan Alfilado to learn about the future of the band.

Absolute Underground: Greetings, where are you at currently and what's going on with the band?

Nathan Alfilado:

Currently we are in our hometown of Montreal, Quebec. We just released our full length album, played an amazing album launch release show (not that we were amazing but rather, those brave [people] in attendance were). Currently, we are getting ready to play a few out-of-town gigs. There is much juggling to do, as most of the band is in university, so for the shows we play in winter, we like to make them count.



AU: Where do you take influence from? There are obviously elements of thrash/power/black metal running through your veins.

NA: The many influences that people hear in our music really just come from the varied backgrounds that we all have as musicians. While I am fanatically into black metal, our keyboardist is really into Chopin, and our bassist is into jazz, thus we bring a lot of varied influence to our music. Naturally, we all like bands such as Death, Dimmu Borgir, Judas Priest, Children of Bodom, and Dissection to name a few, and it's from those common points we take inspiration from, before

bringing our own individual elements to each song.

AU: As for the formation of the band, tell us about how you got started and what you want people to know about Dissension.

NA: We began under another name back in 2007. Our lead guitarist, Matteo Conti, and drummer Anthony Pulcini decided to start a band for some high-school talent show and off it went from there. We really started getting serious in 2010 when we changed our name to Dissension, as it was at this point that we realized that there were actually some people out there who genuinely liked the music. What we want people to know about us as a band is simple: we create music

which we enjoy playing to the fullest, and what we want is to bring that fulfilment to other people. We never accept a song that is just a cool riff. Music must be more than that, it needs to be an experience where our [minds] can step outside of the normals bounds of the little self.

AU: The title of the record, *Of Time and Chronic Disease*, reeks of entropy and emptiness. Tell us about how you came to write and name the

album.

NA: The album itself is a collection of some of our earliest songs to some of our latest (at the time which it was recorded). We had been amassing songs for years, so we chose the ones that we thought defined us as a band. Beyond that, we also found a narrative in the succession of songs that are on the album. Lyrically and musically, each song has a story to it and relates to the song that follows it or the one before it. The song "Of Time and Chronic Disease" itself ideals with the reality that each living creature must face: that of death. That is not to say, "Oh, woe is me, life

is nothing, boo hoo," but rather, it's an attempt to reconcile the sobering reality that each living thing dies, and moreover, humans have the consciousness to be aware of what this entails. The whole album is meant to be various interpretations of this fact and the different ways to reconcile with it.

AU: Where are you touring next? Where is your best place to play?

NA: Hopefully, we will be touring come summer, as during the winter and spring we are in school. It's not a very cool statement, but it's the truth, nonetheless.

AU: Who do you want to play with next?

NA: Well there are two dimensions to that. Realistically, the next big band that comes into town. But ideally, well, Amon Amarth, Behemoth, Triptikon, (and if somehow Dissection found a way to resurrect John Nodveidt, then them as

MONTREAL MASSACRE

fucking well).

AU: What is the funniest thing that has happened on the road so far?

NA: We once had a show in which we staged a satanic sermon and sacrificed (as we later found out) a highly flammable doll.

AU: To the metalheads of Canada, what is your final message:

NA: Keep faith, and continue supporting your local bands, as you are probably in one of them. Also, Canada has been turning out a lot of cool bands recently, and we should keep on doing so. Show the world how fucked-up Canadian winters can be.

More information at:

<https://www.facebook.com/DissensionMTL>

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Sleez In The City

CJ Sleez The Swing of Things

Last issue, I sought the wisdom of my readers regarding a personal issue- (i.e. 'To Three or Not to Three'). My monogamous partner of seven years and I were in the midst of a sexual plateau and I was opening a discussion about how we might rev things up by inviting another girl into the mix. I received some great responses and was touched by both the candour and support offered in those notes. Here are two of my favourites-

1) Well my dear, you are asking all the right questions, it is an 'anything can happen' scenario. You're right, you may be resentful after, he may want to share all the time, one of you may become jealous, something may spark between him and the other girl, etc.

All my relationships put together barely add up to 7 years, so I have never known what it's like to be in a familiar rut. I just know that I wouldn't want to share anyone that I am emotionally attached to, especially my girl now, but who knows what would happen after 7 years? So overall, you just have to ask yourself: 1. Is this relationship totally solid and have a minimal risk of failing after the fact? 2. Is this the only solution? 3. Are you willing to risk the bond that you share just on the chance that the sex may be better? Good luck, I hope whatever you choose to do will work out for the two of you. -Jeff M.

2) Hi Darling, I have a very open attitude towards sex, provided no one gets hurt and everyone has fun. That being said, if you are old enough and have a good, complete understanding with your life/sex partner(s), you should be able to express your sexuality in ways that fulfill you. I have known people that have had very open relationships, where both partners are allowed to have sex with many people



under a variety of circumstances, and by and large, the relationship between the principal couple has remained steady and constant.

However, here's the catch: the big word is LOYALTY. If you lose the sense of loyalty in your relationship because of your sex practices, then you have a huge obstacle to overcome. So you start out by agreeing that you both want a threesome, but have you explored all the possible repercussions prior to the fun? Is there something that could go wrong? What sex acts do you want to explore with your partner? What sex acts will make him or her uncomfortable, what kind of partner/s will be acceptable? You must explore your fantasies first by sharing all of them and talking them out while remembering that they are just fantasies and not something to be held against either of you at a later date, or mentioned to anyone else, anytime. It's about communication. If you do not have total understanding between the two of you about what you are about to participate in, then you may have some serious issues come up.

You are beautiful and there is a world of possibilities waiting for you. Good luck, have fun, wish I could join in. They all say that, don't they! -Brian D.

So, in case you're wondering what my final call is... I still haven't made one...

Here's the thing- We not only broke out of our sexual stagnation, we reached an entirely new level of pleasure all on our own. It's not that a threesome's off the table now, but as it turns out, just the idea

of having a ménage became something that when discussed openly together was enough to reignite the spark we'd been missing for the past few months.

We're once again completely viscerally captivated by each other and this time it runs deeper and more passionate than ever before because of the experiences (both real and hypothetical) that we've shared together. That's what you have to remember about maintaining a serious long-term relationship (whether it is romantic or platonic), it's not always going to be great but it can always get better. Sometimes things are good or bad and other times they're just mundane. The trick is to face it all head on, together, with honesty and understanding.

After seven solid years together, we both feel that there's plenty of time ahead of us to explore our options and we agree that we shouldn't rush into anything that could possibly have serious implications on the life we've built together. Besides, occasionally certain things are better left to fantasy. My partner summed it up perfectly when he said to me, "Reality is messy." So, in the spirit of having the two of us explore the possibility further on a cerebral level, I've suggested we watch more porn together that involves the threesome scenarios that interest/excite us. That way, I'll have a better idea of what exactly it is I want and if the opportunity ever presents itself in an organic way- I'll be prepared to decline or partake with grace and self-assurance. In the meantime, it's not something I'll be looking to initiate or make happen. Right now I'm happy to be having more than my fill of ecstasy once again with the one person I truly feel connected to.

Have a question for CJ Sleez concerning Sex, Drugs or Rock n' Roll? Email them to CJsleez@Hotmail.com. If your question is used or printed, she'll send you a free copy of her most recent CD "Valley Of The Shadow". For more info on CJ, check out her band site @ www.CJSLEEZ.com

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Absolute Album Reviews

Sister – Disguised Vultures

Metal Blade Records

Sister is a sleaze rock band from Stockholm that will be putting out their first real full-length album this



year. They released an LP in 2011 and have been doing nothing but touring for the last two years. Rumours are they put on a sick live show. I heard

this band compared to a few bands I love and a few I hate, so I had mixed expectations going into it.

The first song on an album is usually a pretty mediocre one. This one is decent but not too spectacular. The next track, “Sick”, I think is the one that getting pushed the most. I can see why, it’s got a sing-along chorus and it’s pretty catchy with good movement. The next three songs follow the same path to varying degrees. All have have solid music and a chorus that you’ll find yourself singing along to under your breath after a few listens. Track six, “Slay Yourself”, breaks that mold with a fast-paced and two minutes of punk influence... The next song, “Naked”, is obviously the ballad on this album, because every one of these albums needs one. They go all-out on this one, it’s cheesy as fuck and wicked in every way. I can totally see the singer shedding a solitary tear in the video I just assume

they’ll make for this. After that, it’s straight back to rock. This album ends with the “live in the studio” track called “Please Kill Me” that has cheering in the background and a lot of acoustic parts. I wouldn’t want it ended any other way.

This album totally grew on me. It has all the things a sleaze rock/hair metal album needs; the chant-along choruses, easy guitar licks, sex, drugs and sleaze... and it’s got that ballad. They may be following a blueprint, but they’re doing it right. It’s what could have happened if a young Guns N Roses had done crack and speed instead of so much heroin. But seriously, check out the ballad, you’ll get a smile out of it.

-Michael F. Carnage

Down Among The Dead Men- Self-Titled

Metal Blade Records

Down Among the Dead Men is a side project by Dave Ingram from Bolt Thrower and a couple of guys from Ribspreader and Paganizer, who just got together to make some death metal with a crusty edge. This is their



one and only album and it’s self-titled. Totally makes sense with the nihilist and DIY feel of the music.

There’s no easing into this at all, no intros or anything. The first song starts off quickly and keeps a good riff going throughout. “Doomsday Manuscript” sounds like death metal, but you start getting the crust feel on track three, “As Leeches Gorge”. “Adolescence of Time” is the longest song, but I think it’s one of the fastest. It has a simple but great riff straight through, just slowing down for the last minute. “Deadman’s Switch” is a good place to notice the dual guitars moving forward but in almost different directions at parts. On “Handful of Dust”, they are definitely moving in the same direction; the song is seamless and probably top three on this album for me. “Venus Mantrap” has more of a rock’n roll feel to it with a catchy riff and a story about troubles with women... or at least that’s what I think it’s about. The album finishes off with two really good songs. They’re fast, catchy and have some seriously relentless drumming.

This offering has thirteen songs but I’m pretty sure it clocks in at under forty minutes. All the songs get straight to the point with very few frills. It’s not technical or overly

complicated music by any stretch, but it’s not meant to be. I like it, it’s easy to listen to and the really short songs work with a short attention span. It still has enough grab to make your head move and songs you’ll listen to again.

-Michael F. Carnage

Tower of Dudes- Make Your Own Culture

Velvet Rut Records

Gypsy punk may not be a concept everyone is familiar with, so the band Tower of Dudes will soon release an aptly-titled third album, *Make Your Own Culture*, to help define it for the masses. In fact, some listeners may well have to examine for themselves to see how these two cultural worlds work together. Listeners can hear for themselves what this sound is all about when this album is released in March 2014.

This Victoria-based band has performed at Rifflandia and at the Trutnov Music Festival in the Czech Republic. If the saturation of their product on their YouTube channel is any indication, then they are certainly gaining a following. Frontman Johnny Feelings certainly covers a diverse range of topics in the songs this band has developed.

Listeners can’t help but grin at the tune “Morning,” a track that many a 9-to-5-er can relate to. “We Never Learn Anything” can easily become an anthem for many a student who just needs time to process what’s taught in the classroom. This song is not like Pink Floyd’s “Another Brick in the Wall (Part II),” but the lyrics certainly hammer home some interesting points with a simple catchy riff.

The very soulful track “Pretty Special” is a great one to listen to on a late afternoon when life seems to get you down. But by the time the evening arrives, perhaps “Party (Like You Used To Do)” can be a march towards freedom. “Let It Go” has a Greek-influenced instrumental that can

get a few listeners wanting to shout “Opa!” but before the punk sounds become forgotten, all anyone has to do is to jump ahead to “10,000 Hours.” This tune has the familiarity of a 90s era sound. It’s fusion overdrive to the extreme.

Audiophiles can enjoy Tower of Dudes with a special ‘45 that offers the title track “Make Your Own Culture” and “Copy/Paste” on one side and Black Valley Gospel’s “Hellbound Blues” and “A Spectral Presence” on the other. This limited edition release is worth seeking out for the Rhyme of the Mariner-inspired woodprint that’s featured on one side of the sleeve and the Frankenstein art on the other. But it will be the green marble-coloured pressing that will certainly make this single worth talking about.

Not many independent labels go this far to make a vinyl product stand out. On the CD, the colours offer a different look at the contrasting themes. From blue skies to a drab universe, the folk-inspired art style is just demonstrating one unique fixture of what the Tower of Dudes’ music is all about. This band will no doubt further this unique sub-genre of punk music in the Pacific West Coast scene.

-Ed Sum

Shit Fucker- Suck Cocks in Hell Self Released

In the spirit of Motor City Mayhem flies Shit Fucker. Actually it’s as if Mayhem’s original nihilist/vocalist, Dead, has risen from the grave to front a really drunk and angry MC5.

Right away, with the album cover depicting their band symbol contorted into a shape of a swastika and song titles like “Rock’n Roll Freaky Dude”, I quickly realized that alcohol is the driving force behind this “piss-take on a parody” world view. If you’re fond of Gwar’s mutant humour then you can probably stomach this strange trip through humanoid culture.

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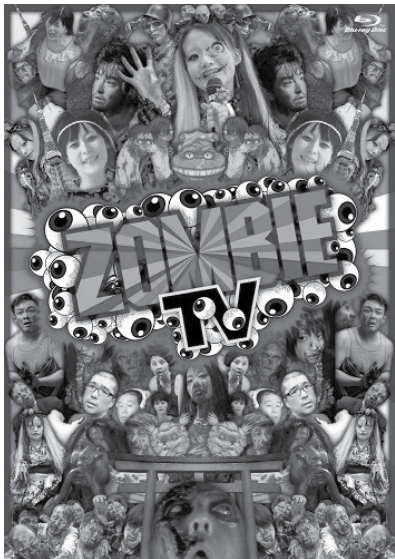
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Absolute Film Reviews



Zombie TV Pony Canyon

Zombie TV is the newest anthology film from the Japanese splatter king Yoshihiro Nishimura (*Tokyo Gore Police*) and newcomers Mealie Makuno and Naoya Tashiro. This film doesn't play like your regular anthology; it's more like a bunch of random Japanese television shows thrown together for an hour and 17 minutes. At first, it feels a little disjointed until you realize that the segments come back around twice or three times throughout the film. And some of these segments are unbelievably funny! Let's imagine that the world has been infected with zombies, like in Nishimura's previous film, *Helldriver*. The world is still operating normally, except that there are

walking dead roaming the streets looking for some poor fool to eat. You turn on the television and start to watch your favourite program, except now all your shows are zombie related, because that's the world you're living in. The pop singers are zombies, the dramas you like have zombies in them and your exercise routine is now for the undead. Even the newscasts are about the dead coming back to life and feasting on the flesh of the living. That's the beauty of this film- the fact that the directors could capture the random wackiness that is Japanese television and make it into a feature. If you've ever had the chance to watch some Japanese TV, you'll understand that it's pretty messed up. But imagine

that those zany shows had zombies in them? Some of the segments include an instructional sex video for zombies, a bunch of zombie pop singer obsessed fans trying to get bitten, the last man on earth trying his hardest to turn into a zombie and a funny old man zombie played by Jiji Bu (*Tokyo Gore Police*, *Vampire Girl VS Frankenstein Girl*). There are some really good zombie effects littered throughout the picture and there are even a couple of segments that show the viewer how the crew did the makeup. In some parts it gets really weird, but that's to be expected from the guy who unleashed *Vampire Girl VS Frankenstein Girl* onto the world. This film feels a little lighter than Nishimura's gore-filled body of

work, but it definitely has the same charm that we are used to. Plus, some regular actors show up now and then that should bring a smile to any fans out there. I love Yoshihiro Nishimura and will watch anything his name is attached to, so this was an easy sell for me, but if you're in the mood to laugh at some random, weird Japanese zombie goodness then you are in for a treat! *Zombie TV* is hitting the film fest circuit at the moment, so if you get the chance to see it I say go for it, because it might be a while until it reaches our shores on DVD or Blu Ray.

-Cody No Teeth

I, Frankenstein Hopscotch Features Lakeshore Entertainment

The modern Prometheus has issues, and some of these get explored in *I, Frankenstein*. While this film tries to follow after the events from Mary Shelley's masterpiece novel, *Frankenstein*, the events do not continue in that universe. The tale and focus shifts to that of a comic book one, completely toned down by writer/director Stuart Beattie for a general PG-13 rated audience to enjoy. Fans of the graphic novel of the same name most likely will appreciate this film more.

This time around, the monster's perspective is central to this tale. His feelings of being totally isolated and attempts to integrate into society are at the core of this film. But not everyone will understand how this monster has transformed through the ages. Various concepts from the original source material are planted in this movie, like the purveyance of the Gothic tradition and the thematic symbolism of fire and light — but

how all of that will explode on-screen depends on who can understand this film.

At face level, this popcorn B-movie shows that Frankenstein's monster will walk into a hidden war that has raged on for centuries. This world, invented by comic book creator Kevin Grevioux and Beattie, fits right in with their previous creation: the *Underworld* franchise universe. And if a crossover gets planned, thankfully there can be only one golem who can become a great equalizer, should all the supernatural beasts go into an all-out world war. The vampires and lycans had better look out!

In Beattie's and Grevioux's world, the Gargoyles are agents of heaven who are fighting "on behalf" of heaven to keep the unruly demons at bay. As for why the angels are not involved, perhaps that might get addressed in another story. The beast is named Adam (Aaron Eckhart) by Leonore (Miranda Otto), the queen of the Gargoyles. Not knowing who is truly friend or foe, Adam struggles, wondering if he truly has a soul or not and, like a certain little wooden puppet who wishes for more, the

character's true worth and purpose get interestingly tested.

The screenplay tries to engage viewers in the life of a creation by a mad scientist. Is the thing that emerged from the womb a beast, or something more? Unfortunately, this 93-minute movie is not enough time to engage viewers into figuring out the creature's pathos. The acting is decent, but all the performers have done better in other projects. The movie is only as good as the script that dictates the actors' performance.

A fair chunk of the movie requires viewers to at least know the lore and perhaps read the comic book prologue. Had there been the right promotional material to distribute to audiences waiting for the movie to start (namely a comic) then this movie might have made more sense. But like any version, re-telling or re-imagining of a product, only further study of the original source material can help viewers realize what a new version is trying to tell. Without this source material, *I Frankenstein* feels like a film that certainly belongs in the same calibre as Beattie's previous films, namely *G.I. Joe: The Rise of*



Cobra.

This writer/director does manage to communicate one idea successfully: If Adam is to become a modern hero, much like Prometheus of legend, he will just have to figure out how to tell humanity that, when they are not looking the other way. Unfortunately, most of the times, they are all waiting with guns, rifles and pitchforks.

-Ed Sum

Send Us your Live Reviews by Email admin@absoluteunderground.ca

Absolute Live Review

Disciples of Power Display Of Decay Dec 21st, 2013 DV8 Underground Edmonton, Alberta

Edmonton heavy metal legends Disciples Of Power are back in action, and it was an honour to have them play a gig at DV8 after another show they had planned for the food bank had more or less fell through. D.O.P. is an Edmonton staple for metal and were quite active in the late 80s up until around 2002. I remember seeing them in Fort McMurray back when Rod Smart was bringing bands to town on a regular basis, back when some folks referred to shows as "a mosh", back in high school.

It's great being able to do shows for older bands, there is always a cool story or two to be heard and it is a great thing for a new generation of show-goers to check out something they missed in the old days when

posters and word-of-mouth were the only way to get the word out. Before we get into the show, I'd have to say a highlight was talking with the drummer, Dean, about a bit of D.O.P. history... he kinda put it like this: "We were going steady until grunge came along and fucked things up for everybody." I remember taking that hit as well, and it hit hard- all of a sudden everything that was important as far as music goes was overshadowed and less important then it should have been for a while there. But hey, last year was suitably dubbed the Year of Thrash by the great Absolute Underground and it surely was... so while the thrash and metal scene is enjoying some much-deserved props for being there, it's good to see bands like D.O.P. resurface. As far as local stuff, seeing something like The Malignant Growth, Drool, The Smalls, Section VII, The Hoods, Cremation, Process, Unsound, The Grand Poobah and a few others folks in my age group might have seen in these parts would be a good bit of nostalgia for sure.

Back on track with D.O.P. though, Wes, Dean and Chris are back at it with Shane (who was in Section VIII with Wes and Dean) doing vocals, and Ben who was in Begrim Exemious joining Wes on guitars. I thought they played a pretty intense set, plenty of old-school time changes and those haunting melodic parts lined up with plenty of mega-heavy riffing. As would be expected, some of the older metal folk in the crowd remember D.O.P.'s glory days, but I wouldn't say that steals too much thunder from this lineup - it will be cool to see what's next for The Disciples... I'd book em again for sure. Display of Decay was a great opener, and although I hadn't seen them since the old location, a few of them frequent DV8 pretty often, so it was good to see them play again. Some pretty bad-ass metal for a younger band. I believe we have a show with D.O.P. and Begrim in the works, so that one will be gnarly indeed.

-Rod Rookers

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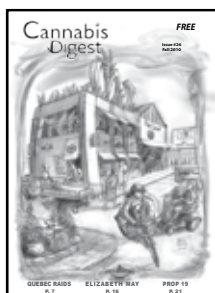
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Absolute Gear Review

Kaotica Eyeball

By Ryan Primrose

Kaotica is a Calgary-based company that aims to give the do-it-yourself crowd the ability to professionally record vocals in any kind of environment. The Kaotica Eyeball microphone isolation chamber was designed with a do-it-yourself ingenuity to give any vocalist the chance to produce studio quality recordings without having to record inside an isolation booth. The Eyeball is a foam sphere that slips over the microphone, isolating the recording device from poor acoustics. Within the Eyeball, is a channel that focuses your voice into the microphone that is located inside the sphere behind a pop filter.



The device's strength is the ability to channel every sound directed at it into the microphone without any negative effects from poor acoustics. This is a perfect device for home recording if you do not want to soundproof an entire room just to produce a professional-sounding recording. Instead, use the Eyeball to acoustically isolate

the microphone from an acoustically imperfect

environment, to get the most out of the sounds that are being directed into the device.

Using the Eyeball would be an easy adjustment for any musician. The pop filter perfectly eliminates any hisses, clicks, or pops that may turn up in a recording. I can see this recording apparatus being most useful in do-it-yourself situations in professional studios, basements and jam spaces, everywhere where there is the will and spirit to produce focused, detailed, and thick-sounding recordings. This is a great investment for anyone who wants a studio-quality recording on a do-it-yourself budget.

"Bringing Metal To The Masses"

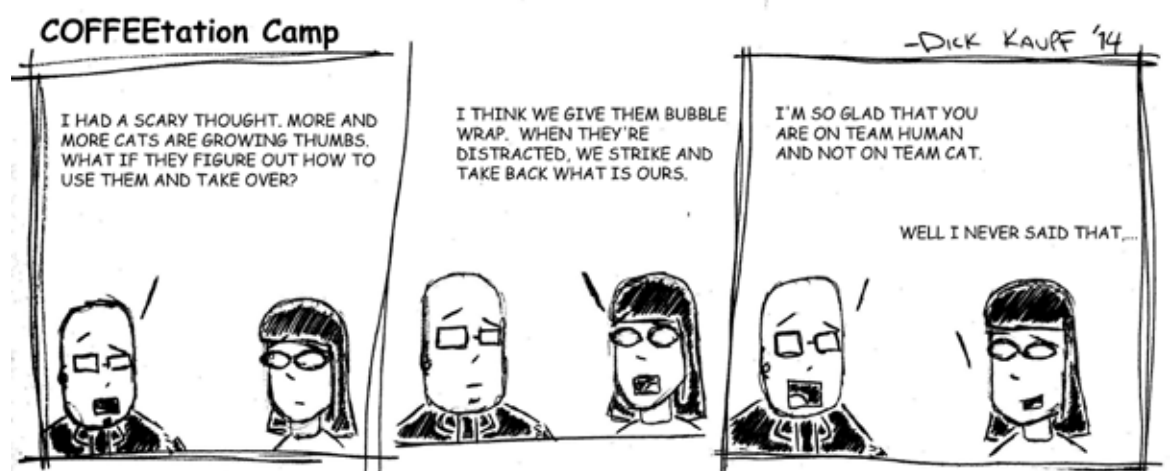
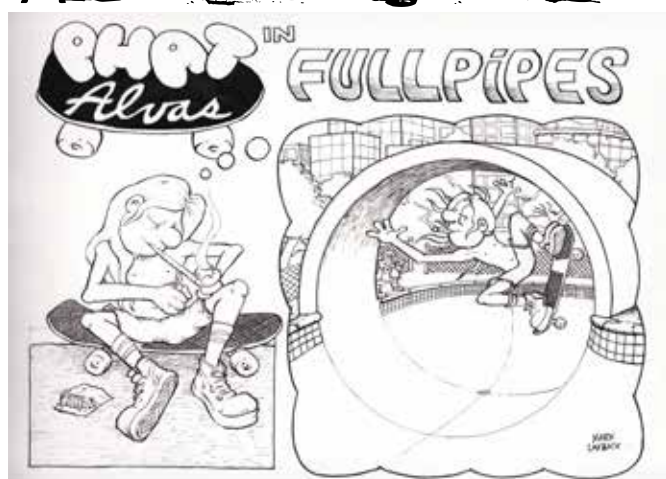


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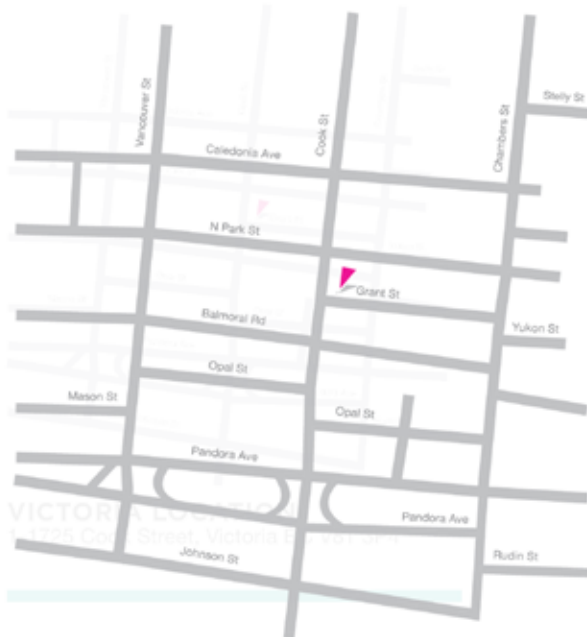
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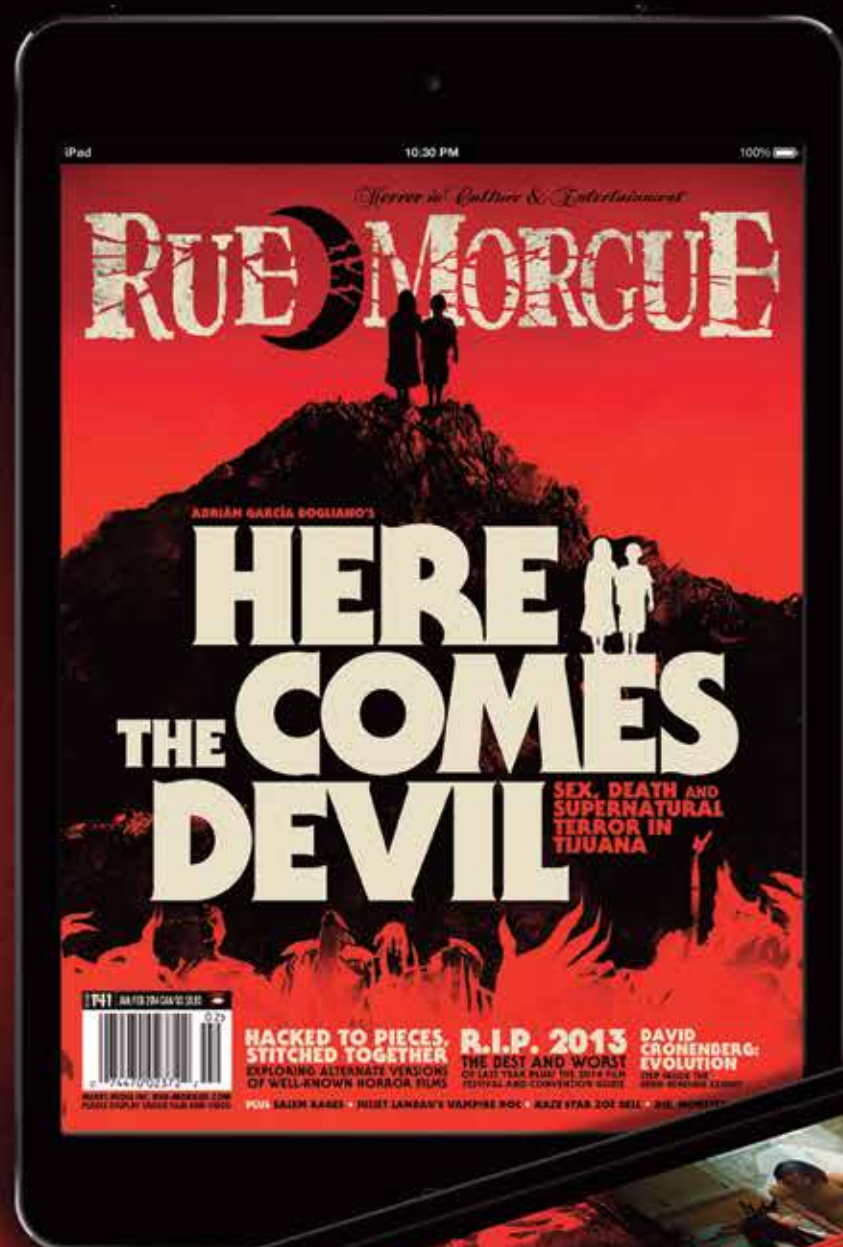
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